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*The Vocational Rehabilitation  
of Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers*

Final Report  
Contract # 300-85-0134

U.S. Department of Education  
Rehabilitation Services Administration

September, 1987



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**THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION  
OF MIGRANT AND SEASONAL FARMWORKERS**

**FINAL REPORT**

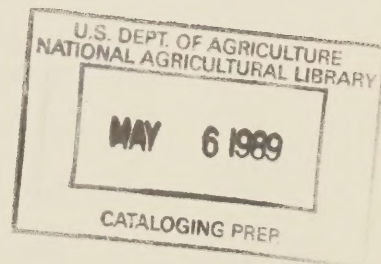
Contract Number 300-85-0134

U.S. Department of Education  
Rehabilitation Services Administration

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San Francisco, CA 94118

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September, 1987



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### 1. BACKGROUND AND EVALUATION DESIGN

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 established, under Section 312, a program of grants to State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies to serve handicapped migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFW's) and their families.

This final report presents the key findings and recommendations from an evaluation of the 11 state projects funded in FY 1986. The evaluation draws on data collected from interviews with project staff, RSA Regional office staff, and project MIS data from all eleven projects. There was a special focus on four key states-- California, Florida, Illinois, and Texas. In these states, which include more than half the nation's migrant and seasonal farmworkers, data collection also included interviews with over 250 current and former clients of the Section 312 projects.

Because migrant and seasonal farmworkers continue to be a severely disadvantaged population, the evaluation focused particularly on the ability of state agencies to adapt traditional vocational rehabilitation approaches to the special needs of handicapped MSFW's. Because MSFW's are concentrated in rural agricultural areas of the country, special attention was also given to service delivery strategies developed by local offices to address these local conditions.

The evaluation standards were developed with the assistance of a Technical Advisory Committee, and were approved by the Assistant Secretary of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services; they address service delivery and outcomes, the impact of federal funding in building state VR agencies' capacity to serve MSFW's, and project management.



## 2. THE CURRENT STATUS OF HANDICAPPED MIGRANT AND SEASONAL FARMWORKERS

There are approximately 280,000 handicapped migrant and seasonal farmworkers in the agricultural labor force, and another 60,000 handicapped dependents of farmworkers.

The handicapped farmworkers served by the Section 312 projects, like the MSFW population as a whole, are very poor. Agricultural work continues to be highly seasonal and most MSFW's probably are unemployed for over 26 weeks per year. Average family incomes are under \$4,000 per year for a family with multiple wage earners. Handicapped farmworkers often continue to work despite their disability, but cannot compete successfully for jobs and, thus, become poorer. The average family income of handicapped MSFW's served by Section 312 projects was \$2,316 as compared to \$4,896 for clients in RSA programs overall.

The handicapped farmworkers served by the Section 312 projects, like the national MSFW population are mostly Hispanic or Black. Only 30% of the Hispanic farmworkers regularly spoke English. While educational levels among younger MSFW's are rising, the overall educational levels of MSFW's are very low. Their median educational level is 6.6 years as compared to 11.3 years for RSA clients overall. Three-quarters of farmworkers over 40 years of age have only a primary school education.

Almost one-third of MSFW disabilities are work-related; 21% of the handicapped farmworkers interviewed were disabled as a result of a work accident. Another 11% of the those interviewed reported their disability stemmed from a work-related illness.





### 3. PATTERNS OF SERVICE IN THE SECTION 312 PROGRAM

#### A. LEVEL OF SERVICE

In 1973, prior to the initiation of the Section 312 program, a national survey of farmworker households sponsored by RSA, Handicapped Migrant Farmworkers, found that no handicapped farmworkers were receiving vocational rehabilitation services.

Slightly over 2,500 handicapped migrant and seasonal farmworkers are now served each year by Section 312 projects. The rehabilitation rate among the Section 312 projects is 67%, slightly higher than the overall rate for state vocational rehabilitation programs. Slightly more than 500 MSFW's are being rehabilitated each year.

Approximately half (52%) of the MSFW's who apply for vocational rehabilitation services are accepted for service, slightly less than the RSA overall rate of acceptance which is 60%. The primary reason for the lowered rate of acceptance is that MSFW applicants for service are more likely than other applicants to have moved or lost contact with the Section 312 program before receiving services.

The Section 312 program is providing adequate levels of service to MSFW's in areas where projects are funded; the projects function in only 11 of the 23 states with the highest populations of migrant and seasonal farmworkers in the country. Although the 11 state projects include the major MSFW states, projects do not always cover all parts of the state with large populations of migrant and seasonal farmworkers. Levels of service are particularly low in comparison to estimated populations in non-project areas of California (the largest MSFW state in the nation) and Florida (the third largest MSFW state).





## B. OUTREACH: EQUITABLE ACCESS TO VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

Active outreach was a component of most Section 312 projects and was very successful in affording MSFW's access to vocational rehabilitation services. The profile of MSFW's in the project MIS files was quite similar to that of the MSFW population as a whole, although handicapped MSFW's are older and have smaller families than the MSFW population overall.

Outreach involved close coordination with other agencies serving migrant and seasonal farmworkers, most importantly, migrant health clinics. The large number of clients who contacted the VR agency because of the influence of family or friends suggest that the projects had established good credibility in the farmworker communities served.

Because there are inadequate community mental health resources in rural areas (especially those providing culturally-appropriate service to Hispanics), referrals of psychologically disabled clients were low in all the projects except for one (Utah).

The Section 312 projects were especially effective in reaching migrant farmworkers in the Mid-Western migrant stream, both in an "upstream" state (Illinois) and in a "homebase" state (Texas).

The only exceptions to the overall high quality of outreach were in two sites in the Eastern Migrant stream where outreach to Hispanic migrant workers was inadequate because the projects did not have bilingual staff.



### C. EFFECTIVENESS OF SERVICE

Traditional measures of program impact do not adequately describe the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to MSFW's. The major impact of VR services seems to lie in the quality of post program-job as measured by job stability and client satisfaction. Rehabilitated MSFW's were more satisfied with their jobs than non-rehabilitated clients or those not accepted for service, and expected their jobs to last longer. There are state by state variations in post-program employment due to differences in program design, local labor markets, and composition of the farmworker population, but between 35% and 60% of MSFW clients return to farmwork after receiving rehabilitation services. Although rehabilitation, may, in some cases, involve movement into a non-agricultural occupation, these jobs are usually low-skilled ones in service industries.

Clients were generally very satisfied with services. Three-quarters of the clients who were accepted for service considered their program experience to be "good" or "excellent". From the client perspective, the most important benefit of the VR program was receipt of medical services (including both physical restoration and diagnostic services) but counseling, also, was felt to be an important and valuable service. Few of the respondents felt that the increased employability was one of the major impacts of the VR services they had received.

The standard MIS measures of success do not provide an entirely adequate or accurate measure of the impact of receiving vocational rehabilitation for migrant and seasonal farmworkers; "successful" clients who return to farmwork may subsequently be unemployed; "unsuccessful" clients are surprisingly pleased with the service they have received. The evidence suggests that there are long-term positive impacts on MSFW employability (decreased seasonality of employment, greater job satisfaction) but these are very difficult to measure.





#### D. TYPES OF SERVICES PROVIDED TO MSFW'S

The primary service provided was physical restoration; 43% of the in-plan clients interviewed had received physical restoration services. Only 19% of the in-plan clients interviewed had received either vocational training or another job-related training service such as participation in a job-search workshop. Older less-educated farmworkers were very unlikely to receive vocational training, while younger MSFW's with higher educational levels were most likely to receive training. Almost half (49%) of the MSFW teenagers with a 9th grade education or better were in training while less than one-fifth (17%) of farmworkers over 40 years of age with less than a 9th grade education were in training.

The low levels of vocational training delivered stem, in part, from the fact that lack of education and language barriers prevent many older handicapped MSFW's from successfully participating in the training courses that are available. Where programs providing combined skills training/remedial education and English as a Second Language were available, Section 312 projects used them and provided increased levels of vocational training to clients. However, increased attention to vocational training is required, in all of the projects, in order to address the long-term issues of employability faced by handicapped MSFW's.

The Section 312 projects did not often provide placement assistance or post-placement assistance to MSFW's. Slightly less than one-fifth of the rehabilitated clients had received placement assistance.



## E. INNOVATION

After the first wave of innovation in developing effective service delivery strategies during the '70's, the Section 312 projects have given priority to implementing a model which is quite successful. The few instances of innovation among the projects are very promising but require increased emphasis. An important issue that is being addressed is the development of career awareness of MSFW's who have little educational background, work experience, or reliable sources of information about jobs outside of farmwork. These innovations include: adaption of job-club models to MSFW clients (California), and job-search/work adjustment classes for MSFW's (Texas). In Illinois, special attention is being given to the development of rapid, effective approaches to the vocational evaluation of farmworkers.





#### 4. PROGRAM MANAGEMENT, ADMINISTRATION, AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

##### A. USE OF SECTION 312 FUNDS

There is a wide state by state variation in state VR agencies' use of Section 312 funding. Federal funds were used to support counseling staff to serve MSFW's, for purchase of case services for MSFW's or both. In three states, Section 312 funding was being used successfully to extend the agencies' capabilities to serve MSFW's in a new geographical area. In the other states, funding was used to continue service in existing areas, in some cases combined with efforts to upgrade service.

##### B. STATE MATCH FOR FEDERAL FUNDS

State VR agencies usually provided more than the required 10% match for Section 312 funding, although state-by-state variations in project definition and accounting do not provide a common basis for comparison. In the one state where state match was calculated on a firm basis (Idaho), the state match was 70%. It is estimated that the match ranges from the required minimum (where federal funding supports staff and purchased services to expand service to a new area) to approximately 200% of the Section 312 funding (where federal funding only supports a portion of purchased case services).



### C. PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

RSA funding supported only very low levels of administrative effort in the Section 312 projects, usually less than 10% of the Project Director's time.

There was a great deal of variation from state to state in quality of program management as measured by clear definition of objectives, implementation of objectives as planned, and reporting to RSA. While all projects experienced, to some degree, a tension between the special objectives of the migrant and seasonal farmworker service project and overall agency goals and performance objectives, these were usually successfully resolved by Project Directors. The more serious management problems occurred in states where there was no clear-cut accountability for project management and the Project Director did not have adequate authority to implement project objectives.

### D. STAFFING

State VR agencies have staffed local offices serving MSFW's with bilingual/bicultural counseling staff who establish close rapport with MSFW clients. Several agencies make very effective use of paraprofessional counseling assistants who engage in active outreach, counseling, and provision of supportive services, while the lead VR counselors handles case management.

### E. COORDINATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES

Section 312 projects coordinate well with other organizations serving MSFW's, as required by the legislation. Coordination is strongest with migrant health clinics (which provide a source of referrals, as well as diagnostic services). This coordination is crucial since VR agencies do not generally provide medical and training services themselves, but, rather, case management. Coordination has insured that existing resources are used efficiently, but VR agencies will need to give still more attention to strengthening and expanding the present networks of service providers to meet the full range of handicapped farmworkers' needs.





#### F. UTILIZATION OF SIMILAR BENEFITS

State VR agencies' operating procedures (designed to achieve the most cost-effective rehabilitations by relying on services to clients provided by other social service programs at no cost) have a negative effect on quality of service to MSFW's, for whom it is extremely important to "fast track" services. Although Section 312 projects have developed very effective coordination with other agencies serving MSFW's, schools, hospitals, and physicians, "similar benefits" are not available in many rural areas. Attempts to substitute "similar", but inadequate alternatives (e.g. once a week English as a Second Language training in lieu of intensive vocational English as a second language), decrease the effectiveness of rehabilitation services.

Even where similar benefits are available, for example, hospitalization for MSFW's who are medical indigents under Hill-Burton provisions, delays (e.g. one-year waiting lists for surgery in the Rio Grande Valley) make similar benefits an inadequate substitute for purchased case services for the most mobile and most economically disadvantaged among the MSFW's.

#### G. DETERMINATION OF SEVERITY OF MSFW'S HANDICAPS

Standard approaches to determining severity of handicap do not provide an accurate basis for determining the severity of MSFW's handicaps, many of which are functional handicaps. Since degree of severity is the basis for prioritizing services, these standard evaluation procedures result in less than adequate levels of service to those MSFW's who are incorrectly determined to be non-severe. This is a particular problem where a state order of selection does not allow VR counselors to purchase case services for clients determined to be non-severe. Improved approaches to determination of severity are required to afford MSFW's equitable service.



## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

In the following section we present the major recommendations of the study, first for action by RSA at the federal level, then for action by State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies.

### A. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTIONS BY RSA

**RECOMMENDATION 1:** RSA should require the VR agencies in states with large populations of migrant and seasonal farmworkers to provide, in their State Plans, a description of measures undertaken to provide effective service to MSFW's in all major agricultural areas.

Section 312 projects have demonstrated that state VR agencies can successfully provide vocational rehabilitation services to migrant and seasonal farmworkers. However, the Section 312 grant program is not adequate to insure access to VR services by MSFW's in most non-project areas. Planning for service to migrant and seasonal farmworkers should be integrated into states' overall planning process.

The list of 23 states with major farmworker populations in Table IV-4 of this report provides a preliminary basis for developing a final list of states with significant populations of MSFW's and identifying those areas within these states where the numbers of handicapped MSFW's justify special service efforts.

State planning efforts should include those organizations with special skills in serving MSFW's in accordance with Rehabilitation Act requirements for coordination at the local level. These organizations should include, at a minimum, migrant health service providers, farmworker employment training organizations funded by JTPA, Section 402, and farmworker advocacy groups such as State migrant councils.





**RECOMMENDATION 2:** RSA should initiate efforts to improve state VR agencies' determinations of the severity of MSFW's handicaps.

The utilization of the Functional Assessment Inventory (FAI), an easily-administered, extensively validated assessment tool provides a means to improve VR counselors' determinations of client severity, taking into account the multiple factors which enter into migrant and seasonal farmworkers' handicaps. Section 312 grantees should be required to utilize this tool for determinations of MSFW severity beginning in 'FY 88 for a 3-year period.

After the initial period of 3 years use of the FAI (the length of the grant award), its effectiveness as a valid measure of functional assessment of MSFW handicap should be evaluated. If its validity is confirmed, grantees should be required to utilize the FAI for determinations of severity of MSFW handicaps as a regular feature of the Section 312 project.

**RECOMMENDATION 3:** RSA should initiate coordinated efforts at the federal level to improve the infrastructure available in rural areas to deliver effective vocational rehabilitation services to MSFW's. Coordination should involve, at a minimum, the service delivery system for vocational training (Office of Farmworker and Rural Employment Programs, Employment Training Administration, Department of Labor) and the migrant health care system (Migrant Health Program, Bureau of Health Care Delivery and Assistance, Department of Health and Human Services).

The fundamental approach to vocational rehabilitation involves case management. Section 312 projects have done an excellent job of coordinating services at the local level, but appropriate vocational training resources and resources for physical restoration remain inadequate in most rural areas. The migrant health program does not currently support hospitalization costs involved in physical restoration and other sources of similar benefits are not extensive enough to meet the need. Efforts to develop the delivery system for vocational training should focus on delivery models combining skills training in demand occupations, remedial education, and English as a Second Language (as needed) in an integrated program. There is a crucial need for curricula designed specifically to meet the special needs of MSFW's and provide support for remediation (including development of literacy) in combination with vocational training.



Additional collaborative efforts at the federal level should address the extremely important issue of health education and prevention efforts designed to lower the rate of work-related disabilities, an effort that is, by its nature, inter-disciplinary, involving health educators, farmworker service providers, and vocational rehabilitation professionals.

Another area deserving serious attention is the development of joint efforts to conduct "agricultural skills upgrading" projects involving USDA and university extension personnel in efforts to secure for handicapped MSFW's jobs within agriculture which have less seasonality and less physical demands than field work. Private sector involvement combining job redesign with skills upgrading efforts is highly desirable, and achievable, with leadership at the federal level.

Yet another area of great importance is efforts to develop in rural areas, community mental health resources responsive to the many migrant and seasonal farmworkers who experience psychological disabilities which seriously affect their ability to work productively but which remain undiagnosed. Joint efforts are critical in this area as improvement is not only needed in diagnosis but in developing facilities which can provide culturally-appropriate treatment.

Collaboration with the Migrant Education program in providing habilitation services for handicapped MSFW youth in the transition from school to work is also highly desirable. For this group, a focus on activities designed to expand these youth's awareness of career options and to prevent high school dropout is the top priority.



**RECOMMENDATION 4:** In monitoring Section 312 grantees, RSA should utilize performance measures which provide incentives to deliver quality service as measured by decreased seasonality of employment and increased service to the most vocationally handicapped among MSFW's.

A system of "weighted" closures providing "quality points" based on the severity of client handicap and quality of employment at rehabilitation would provide incentives to State VR agencies to provide services to MSFW's which result in long-term improvement in employability, as opposed to short-term employment.

A simple system of management by objectives utilized by the Texas Commission for the Blind provides a preliminary conceptual framework for such a system of incentives--based on a matrix where "severity" and "quality of outcome" interact to generate quality points for weighting closures. (A sample of the matrix is included in Section V of this report).

Additional study is required to develop valid measures of job stability/seasonality at closure and to explore the best weighting to encourage placements outside of agriculture as well as return to farmwork.





**RECOMMENDATION 5:** RSA should support research and development efforts designed to provide improved strategies to address the special problems faced by handicapped MSFW's, with priority given to effective methods to expand MSFW's awareness of jobs outside of farmwork. Development support should include reinstating the annual conferences of Section 312 projects.

Increased attention to effective strategies to expand handicapped MSFW's awareness of employment alternatives is a high priority, since field work, harvesting, cultivating, and irrigating are very physically demanding work which will not be appropriate for those handicapped MSFW's whose disabilities cannot be treated by provision of physical restoration services.

The National Institute of Disability and Rehabilitation Research should give increased priority to research and development efforts relating to the special service needs of MSFW's and the special issues relating to service delivery in rural needs.

The job-club approach and the career awareness/work adjustment class approach both deserve increased attention, curriculum development, evaluation, and efforts toward replication.

The annual conferences of Section 312 projects held in the past, provided a valuable forum to exchange information on effective service delivery strategies, to deliver technical assistance in areas where needed, and to address common problems. They should be reinstated.



**RECOMMENDATION 6:** RSA should further examine the level and type of support for vocational rehabilitation services to MSFW's by state VR agencies with particular attention to the relation between Section 312 support for services to MSFW's and support under the Title 1 state grant program, given the current level of service to MSFW's and the projected universe of need. In addition, RSA should also examine how efficiently and effectively Section 312 resources are used and recommend measures to improve the allocation of resources among different client services.

The current Section 312 program is rehabilitating 500 MSFW's per year nationally, out of an estimated population of 280,000 handicapped MSFW's in the labor force. State VR agencies are currently matching federal funding at above the minimum level of 10%; the recommendation to require states to address service to MSFW's as part of the regular state plans would increase the level of service to MSFW's using Section 110 funds from the Basic Grant Program.

Despite the impressive increases over the past 13 years in providing VR services to handicapped MSFW's, levels of service will need to rise greatly to provide access to vocational rehabilitation services for even a small portion of the farmworkers for whom public-sector vocational rehabilitation services are not simply one option, but the only option, other than reliance on public assistance.

Additionally, the recently-passed Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) is expected to legalize the status of over 300,000 foreign-born illegal farmworkers, among them many who are handicapped and who will require vocational rehabilitation assistance.





## B. ACTIONS BY STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AGENCIES

**Recommendation 1:** State VR agencies should continue efforts to staff offices in agricultural areas with bilingual/bicultural counselors able to provide effective counseling and support to MSFW's.

Section 312 grantees have successfully recruited bilingual/bicultural staff who are providing effective service to handicapped MSFW's. However, employment requirements including specifying minimum educational levels such as a Master's degree may pose barriers to recruitment of counseling staff in rural areas. State agencies should review job descriptions for counseling staff to insure that job requirements do not include educational requirements unrelated to effective performance; at the same time they should insure that job descriptions for counseling positions where the incumbents will serve a significant proportion of MSFW's include criteria relating to experience and skills in providing social services to MSFW's. '

**RECOMMENDATION 2:** State VR agencies should review the scope of Section 312 Project Directors' authority to make project-related decisions.

Increased authority for Section 312 Project Directors should improve lines of communication with project staff and with regular office supervisors, including the ability to provide adequate management direction to project counseling staff who, currently, are primarily responsible to office supervisors, not Section 312 project management.



**RECOMMENDATION 3:** State VR agencies should upgrade their MIS systems' capabilities in reporting Section 312 project performance in order to provide the basis for improved planning and project evaluation.

The basic service delivery system to provide effective service to MSFW's is in place in most areas covered by the Section 312 projects. State-level planning and evaluation are not yet adequate to "fine tune" the delivery system to further improve performance.

State VR agencies should give special consideration to re-examining the adequacy of standard measures of VR success and standard methods for analyzing agency performance in order to provide the basis for planning their service to migrant and seasonal farmworkers. Investments in this developmental effort might take place most effectively as part of overall activities designed to improve agency effectiveness in serving educationally disadvantaged and limited-English speaking clients.



## SECTION I: THE SECTION 312 PROGRAM: VR SERVICES FOR FARMWORKERS

### A. INTRODUCTION

The present study, The Vocational Rehabilitation of Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers, examines the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to migrant and seasonal farmworkers<sup>1</sup> under Section 312 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. This is the first comprehensive evaluation of the Rehabilitation Service Administration's efforts in the 13 years since the provisions regarding service to farmworkers were first enacted.

Volume I presents the national findings and recommendations of the evaluation study. Section I reviews the legislative background, development of a service model, and policy assumptions relating to the provision of special services to handicapped MSFW's. Section II contains a review of the methodology for the evaluation. It is followed, in Section III, by a discussion of the special medical, cultural, and socioeconomic conditions characterizing the MSFW service population.

Section IV and V provide a national overview of delivery of VR services to MSFW's by Section 312 projects, with a special emphasis on four major farmworker states (California, Florida, Illinois, Texas) which provide the research focus of the current study. In Section VI, we go on to examine the effect of the special project funding provided by Section 312 in building state VR agencies' capabilities to provide effective rehabilitation services to MSFW's. Finally, in Section VII, we review administration of the Section 312 projects at the state and at the federal level.

Volume 2 consists of state-by-state case studies of the 11 projects funded by the Section 312 program during the 1985-1986 period covered by the evaluation. The case studies provide additional information both on the

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this report we refer to migrant and seasonal farmworkers and members of their families as farmworkers or MSFW's to shorten the cumbersome phrase "migrant and seasonal farmworkers". The term "migrant" refers to families in the migratory labor force.





development of VR services to MSFW's in the different states and current status of service delivery efforts.

## B. LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY BACKGROUND

Over the past century, wave after wave of immigrants (Chinese, Japanese, Indians, Mexicans, and most recently, Central American and Southeast Asian refugees) to the United States have turned to farm labor as the first step toward assimilation into the United States labor force. The availability of cheap seasonal labor was a prime factor in the development of contemporary agribusiness and remains so today.

The working conditions of migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFW's) did not become a focus of public attention in the U.S. until the 1930's when a portion of the surplus labor force, idled by the Depression, turned to migrant work in order to survive. The first efforts to improve the welfare of farmworkers were from the private sector (e.g., grower-operated soup kitchens).<sup>2</sup> As post-Depression era national policy moved to include a broader scope of social issues as the proper focus of federal legislative attention, the situation of farmworkers moved onto the national agenda. But public sector action was slow to come, although church and private voluntary groups paid increasing attention to the situation of farmworkers.

Congressional hearings were held in 1941 and a special Presidential Commission Report was published in 1951. However, it was not until 1960 that there was major Congressional attention to the situation of farmworkers when the famous documentary, Harvest of Shame, by Edward Murrow shocked America's conscience with its portrayal of living conditions in migrant camps.

By the late 1960's, a series of Congressional hearings had been held by the Senate Subcommittee on Migratory Labor on a variety of issues including labor practices, health conditions, hunger, housing, pesticide exposure, and education. A policy consensus emerged from these hearings which identified

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<sup>2</sup> Carey McWilliams, Factories in the Field, 1971



migrant and seasonal farmworkers as a target group for a variety of federal social programs.

A series of new laws were enacted which provided special funding for program interventions and legislative initiatives to curb the worst abuses and exploitative practices. Major legislation in the 60's established the Migrant Health Program (1962) and the Migrant Education Program (1967). The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 provided for the development of farmworker-operated organizations offering a wide variety of services, including employment training, housing initiatives, self-help projects, and emergency services.

The federal attention received by migrant farmworkers was justified for several reasons. First, this subpopulation was recognized as a highly disadvantaged group for whom programmatic intervention was absolutely necessary. Another consideration was that the local tax base in rural areas was inadequate to fund social services for the substantial populations of farmworkers concentrated in these areas of agricultural states.

States were also reluctant to assume financial responsibility for providing services to migrants who might not be state residents. Because of these considerations, migrants came to be recognized as a population which entailed a special federal responsibility.

The mechanism for federal funding of services to migrants varied from agency to agency. Two main administrative alternatives developed: special grants to states (e.g., migrant education) and direct federal funding of specialized non-profits (e.g., migrant health and farmworker employment training programs).

Although the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1967 was amended to authorize the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) to establish special projects serving MSEW's, no funds were appropriated for this purpose. RSA attributed this inaction by Congress to lack of information on the farmworker population and began a needs assessment to determine the numbers,





socioeconomic status, and special needs of handicapped farmworkers<sup>3</sup>. This needs assessment, reported in Handicapped Migrant Farmworkers,<sup>4</sup> was conducted by Interstate Research Associates for RSA in 1973. The study found an extremely high rate of disabilities among farmworkers (31.3% vs 10.7% for the general population). Yet, no farmworkers in this large national survey were aware of vocational rehabilitation services. Finally, in December, 1973, RSA authorized a program of discretionary grants to state vocational rehabilitation agencies beginning in FY '74 to establish a demonstration program to serve the special needs of migrant and seasonal farmworkers.

#### C. LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY AUTHORITY

In September of 1973, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was signed into law as P.L. 93-112. This act was subsequently amended in November 1974, March 1976, November 1978, and February 1984. The most recent amendments were enacted in October, 1986 (P.L. 98-556).

Authorization for the Handicapped Migratory Agricultural and Seasonal Farmworker Vocational Rehabilitation Service Projects is contained in Section 312 of the Act. This section authorizes grants to state or local agencies for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to handicapped migratory agricultural workers or seasonal farmworkers and members of their families. Section 312 states that:

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<sup>3</sup> Proceedings of the National Conference of Handicapped Migrant Agricultural Worker Projects, San Antonio, 1976.

<sup>4</sup> Michael Cortes, Handicapped Migrant Farmworkers, HEW, 1974



The Commissioner, subject to the provisions of section 306, is authorized to make grants to any State agency designated pursuant to a State plan approved under section 101, or to any local agency participating in the administration of such a plan, to pay up to 90 percentum of the cost of projects or demonstrations for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to handicapped individuals, as determined in accordance with rules prescribed by the Secretary of Labor, who are migratory agricultural workers or seasonal farmworkers, and to members of their families (whether or not handicapped) who are with them, including maintenance and transportation of such individuals and members of their families where necessary to the rehabilitation of such individuals. Maintenance payments under this section shall be consistent with any maintenance payments made to other handicapped individuals in the State under this Act. Such grants shall be conditioned upon satisfactory assurance that in the provision of such services there will be appropriate cooperation between the grantee and other public or nonprofit agencies and organizations having special skills and experience in the provision of services to migratory agricultural workers, seasonal farmworkers, or their families. This section shall be administered in coordination with other programs serving migrant agricultural workers and seasonal farmworkers, including programs under title 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, Section 311 of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964,<sup>5</sup> the Migrant Health Act, and the Farm Labor Contractor Registration Act of 1963.

Key elements in the legislative authorization are:

- o The definition of migrant and seasonal farmworkers as a special target group
- o The allowance of maintenance payment to support farmworker participation in vocational rehabilitation programs
- o Requirements for close coordination with other agencies having expertise in serving farmworkers
- o The requirement that the grant program be consistent with state vocational rehabilitation plans.

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<sup>5</sup> After OEO's reorganization into the Community Services Administration, the farmworker organizations established under Section 311 of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 began to be funded primarily by the Department of Labor (formerly Section 303 of CETA, now JTPA Section 402). Their focus is on employment training but also includes some social service delivery (e.g. provision of emergency food and housing, weatherization, and emergency utilities payments). The authorization for the Migrant Education program, ESEA, Title I has been superseded by ECIA, Chapter 1.



## Regulatory Authority

Implementing regulations governing the federal program of grants to serve handicapped migrant and seasonal farmworkers are found in Title 34, Part 375 of the Code of Federal Regulations. This part also references additional federal regulations to be found in Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) and the general regulations in Part 369 which provide definitions and overall regulations for vocational rehabilitation service projects.

## Additional Federal Guidelines

Additional administrative guidance was provided in Sections 4080.1 - 4080.16 of the 1975 Rehabilitation Manual. Other related administrative procedures are contained in yearly Requests for Proposals issued by RSA.

## D. THE PROGRAM MODEL: ISSUES IN THE REHABILITATION OF MSEW'S

Although the Rehabilitation Act does not establish a highly detailed mandate regarding the structuring of programs providing services to MSEW's, the guidelines developed by RSA at the outset of the program addressed a number of substantive issues relating to the rehabilitation of farmworkers.

The RSA-commissioned study, Handicapped Migrant Farmworkers, provided not only a comprehensive profile of handicapped farmworkers, but also an inventory of issues that needed to be addressed in service delivery and a number of well-reasoned recommendations for program design. As had been intended, this study provided the initial basis for discussion of service delivery options and development of program design by both RSA and program operators.

In addition, a consensus regarding several of the major issues involved in the provision of effective vocational rehabilitation service to farmworkers emerged from the series of annual conferences for project operators sponsored by RSA from 1976-1982. These annual conferences were discontinued in 1983.





These assumptions provide a framework for understanding the development of the existing service delivery system and define a model of the "ideal" program, based both on RSA's formal manual and the informal influences on program design (including guidance from RSA regional staff, peer group networking, and approaches used by other MSFW service providers). These assumptions carry over into project planning, grant applications, and subsequent program operations.

The program model is one which evolved, not one which was legislatively outlined. Its strengths lie in the fact that it reflects diverse sources of expert opinion and represents a well-informed set of perspectives on effective vocational rehabilitation service to farmworkers.

Its' elements are the following:

#### **MODEL ELEMENT 1: Outreach**

Effective outreach is considered to be a critical element of the program model. Outreach includes coordination with other farmworker service agencies (migrant health, migrant education, employment offices, voluntary and church groups) and direct outreach in which vocational rehabilitation personnel visit migrant camps, give presentations to community groups, or make home visits.

Outreach activities are to be conducted by paraprofessional staff who are bicultural, bilingual, and, ideally, from a farmworker background. This approach is used to extend coverage where professional staff is scarce or expensive and where service delivery can be augmented efficiently by training paraprofessional "service extenders." It is also assumed that offices providing services will be located close to concentrations of farmworkers.

An important objective of such outreach strategies is to establish a sense of trust in farmworker clients who may not only be unaware of available services, but also, distrustful of those social services that are known to exist. Ideally, credibility of outreach efforts/workers establishes strong positive expectations about program participation for the farmworker client.

#### **MODEL ELEMENT 2: Services to Migrants**

RSA attention focused program development attention on serving migrant farmworkers. The question of interstate coordination services to migrating clients was of particular interest leading to experimentation with the development of a national tracking system for migrants that has since been discontinued due to lack of interest since key states had already developed informal linkages to serve migrants.



### **MODEL ELEMENT 3: Diagnostic Services/Medical Evaluation**

Migrant and seasonal farmworkers continue to have inadequate access to health care. Mobility, poverty, and cultural differences between providers and patients adversely affect quality of care. Migrant health clinics provide an extensive primary health care network for MSFW's, but the main thrust of these public health efforts does not lie in the rehabilitation of disabling conditions.

In addition, farmworker reports of previous diagnoses and characterization of disabilities is, at best, incomplete.

Therefore, diagnostic services are an important component of the "ideal" program of vocational rehabilitation for farmworkers, since it must be assumed that the presenting problem may not correctly or fully characterize the extent of a potential client's disability.

### **MODEL ELEMENT 4: Vocational Assessment**

Migrant and seasonal farmworkers are occupationally segregated and are unfamiliar with employment outside their immediate experience which consists primarily of field labor, harvesting, cultivating, thinning and packing produce.

Barriers of language, and the low educational levels of farmworkers, raise serious questions regarding the utilization of standardized instruments for determining vocational interest, aptitude, or capabilities.

The program model, therefore, assumes some form of experimentation with assessment techniques (for example, mobile evaluation teams) to overcome the formidable difficulties implicit in vocational evaluation of farmworkers, although no specific approach is prescribed.

### **MODEL ELEMENT 5: Individualized Written Rehabilitation Plans (IWRP's)**

The RSA Manual guidelines state that, "In selecting vocational objectives...the objectives should be commensurate with their (clients') abilities, interests, capacities, and limitations." This requirement places a heavy responsibility on counselors working with MSFW's since the combination of a) limited employment opportunities in rural areas, b) limited training facilities, and c) limited career awareness of MSFW clients makes it difficult to develop appropriate individualized rehabilitation plans. The initial guidelines emphasize retraining for farmworkers, mentioning manufacturing and service occupations as possible vocational objectives. Continued employment in agriculture is also considered to be an appropriate vocational objective for some MSFWs. For these individuals, efforts toward agricultural skills upgrading, specifically equipment maintenance and repair are indicated.





### MODEL ELEMENT 6: Counseling

The program model emphasizes strongly the integrity of the farmworker family and envisions provision of services to the whole family in the course of an individual family member's rehabilitation. This includes family counseling, assistance in relocation, assistance in financial management, and any other required services.

The model is particularly innovative in that it specifies "a family vocational rehabilitation plan" that addresses not only the handicapped client's needs, but also takes into account the relationship of those needs to the entire family. The case management is expected to take into account all social factors affecting the family.

### MODEL ELEMENT 7: Supportive Services

The program model stresses provision of transportation to clients and maintenance payments for family support.

The legislative authorization and the regulations allow substantial levels of maintenance (to cover basic living expenses including food, shelter, clothing, and health maintenance for clients and their families, if necessary). This authorization is based on the recognition of the extreme levels of poverty experienced by farmworkers, and the fact that, for most, there is no "safety net" providing support to the family of a handicapped worker. The model envisions maintenance support being extended to the entire family whenever such support is needed in order to enable the farmworker to participate in a rehabilitation program.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> The legislation authorizes maintenance for MSFWs, because of widespread poverty among the population, but it also requires that maintenance payments must be consistent with payments made to other handicapped individuals by a state program. This stipulation immediately nullifies the "special treatment" authorized for MSFW's in the legislation, since state regulations, in the case of the states with Section 312 projects, place strict limitations on allowable types and levels of maintenance support.



#### E. HISTORY OF THE SECTION 312 PROGRAM

Projects serving migrant and seasonal farmworkers were first funded in FY '74 at a level of \$735,000. Seven programs were funded in Florida, Idaho, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Texas, and Wisconsin. But by 1979, the number of projects funded had increased to 14, and the level of funding reached \$1.5 million. By FY '82 the funding level had decreased to the current level of \$950,000. The funding level has been close to the minimum 5% required by Title III, Section B (Special Projects and Supplementary Services) of the legislation.

Funding has generally gone to the "core" states which are evaluated in the current study (California, Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, New York, Texas, Utah, Virginia, and Washington). Five other projects, New Jersey, Arizona, Oregon, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and Wisconsin, were funded in the past but have been discontinued. They were not included in the evaluation.

RSA developed a set of program guidelines early on (in 1975) and incorporated them into Rehabilitation Manual guidance on legislative and regulatory requirements for program operation. During the period 1975-1980, there was also active RSA involvement in addressing a number of issues faced by the projects, including both service delivery issues (e.g., client assessment and maintenance payments) and administrative issues (e.g., follow-up and closure of migrant cases). Since 1981, the Section 312 RSA efforts have focused primarily on administration of the state grant program.



## SECTION II: EVALUATION DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

### A. EVALUATION STANDARDS

Although no specific evaluation criteria were identified in Section 312 of the Rehabilitation Act, the program is required to be evaluated in the same fashion as other RSA programs. The legislative basis for such evaluations is to be found in Section 14(a) of the Act. The relevant provisions are that program evaluations should address:

"... their general effectiveness in achieving stated goals, and their effectiveness in relation to cost, their impact on related programs, and their structure and mechanisms for delivery of service."

The 1984 amendments to the Rehabilitation Act add several provisions to Section 14(a) requirements for evaluations which are particularly crucial in analyzing service to MSFWs. These provisions are that evaluations should take into account the characteristics of the handicapped individuals served and economic factors in the areas served. In addition, the evaluation standards are required to include attention to increases in wages and earnings for persons served. These provisions, designed to adjust performance standards to varying local conditions, are particularly relevant because the migrant and seasonal farmworker population is such a highly disadvantaged one, because work patterns in farm labor are very different than in the mainstream labor force, and because the economies of rural areas where farmworker programs operate are fragile and extremely sensitive to a number of forces in the national economy. In addition, there is a great variability in MSFW populations, program resources, and economic conditions from one local area to another.

The current evaluation of the Section 312 program addresses both grantee performance and RSA administrative systems for awarding, monitoring, and evaluating state vocational agencies who were grantees.

Because there is great variations among farmworker populations from state to state and from one regional economy to another, Volume 2 of The Vocational Rehabilitation of Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers includes state-by-state case studies as an important part of the evaluation. There are, however,





significant national patterns which emerge, despite a wide range of local service goals, service strategies, program constraints, and levels of performance. Since the Section 312 funding level has allowed RSA to support only 10 of the 23 states with significant farmworker populations, the report also examines the federal strategy for developing a national service delivery system which insures that MSFWS receive equitable and effective vocational rehabilitation services to migrant and seasonal farmworkers.

The evaluation standards developed by E.H. White and Company and approved by the Secretary of Education, for conducting the evaluation, fall into several topic areas: planning, service delivery, management, fiscal accountability, direct service outcomes, and capacity-building outcomes.

#### Evaluation Standards

The evaluation standards used in the study are presented on the following pages:



## 1. PLANNING

Planning in farmworker service projects should reflect clear attention to the specific vocational rehabilitation needs of farmworkers and the need for effective use of limited financial and human resources. Data sources, planning assumptions, and objectives should be explicit and specific.

- 1.1 Farmworker service projects should incorporate into the planning process, data reflecting program experience in serving farmworkers, nationally, regionally, and locally, to the greatest extent feasible.
- 1.2 Farmworker service projects should include explicit attention to methods for building state vocational rehabilitation capabilities in the planning process.
- 1.3 The planning should clearly distinguish direct service objectives and developmental objectives in the design of farmworker service projects, giving quantifiable and well articulated goals for direct service.
- 1.4 Farmworker service projects should incorporate information from the farmworker community itself in developing plans for service to handicapped farmworkers.
- 1.5. Farmworker service projects should incorporate into the planning process attention to specific coordination linkages with both employers and appropriate human service providers serving the farmworker community.



## 2. SERVICE DELIVERY

Service delivery in the farmworker service projects should, to the extent possible, make available to handicapped farmworkers the full continuum of services specified in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the applicable Federal Regulations. Service delivery should include effective strategies to meet the special needs of farmworkers.

- 2.1 Farmworker service projects should provide appropriate means for making the farmworker population aware of the availability of vocational rehabilitation service, with particular attention to access to services by subpopulations among farmworkers.
- 2.2 Farmworker service projects should provide means to serve clients which take into account individual language use and cultural mores.
- 2.3 Farmworker service projects should utilize the best available methods for evaluating clients' rehabilitation potential which are linguistically, culturally, and educationally appropriate and provide clients with clear and understandable information about the results of that evaluation.
- 2.4 Farmworker service projects provide effective means for developing individual written rehabilitation plans (IWRP's) which take into account farmworkers' limited access to information about careers and occupations.
- 2.5 Farmworker service projects should provide farmworkers with a range of rehabilitation service options which take into account the special problems faced by farmworkers -- including a migratory lifestyle -- in achieving successful rehabilitation.





### 3. MANAGEMENT

The management of farmworker service projects should meet the statutory and regulatory requirements of the federal program. Project management should also incorporate effective strategies allowing for quality and cost-effectiveness in serving farmworkers.

- 3.1 State vocational rehabilitation agencies should have administrative structures which provide farmworker service projects with leadership capable of addressing the special problems experienced in the rehabilitation of farmworkers.
- 3.2 State vocational rehabilitation agencies should provide effective means to match federal funding under Section 312 to provide the maximum levels of service and highest possible quality of service to farmworkers in their states.
- 3.3 State vocational rehabilitation agencies should provide effective management support to farmworker service projects, including effort, as appropriate, in the areas of staff recruitment, staff development, planning, and cost management.
- 3.4 State vocational rehabilitation agencies should have appropriate coordination arrangements with other organizations providing services to farmworkers. This coordination should include, at a minimum, the coordination specified in Section 312 of the Rehabilitation Act.
- 3.5 Farmworker service projects should possess management information systems that can be used effectively in planning, cost management, and provide an objective basis for monitoring project performance.
- 3.6 State vocational rehabilitation agencies should evaluate farmworker service project process and performance periodically in relation to objectives of the federal project support and in relation to state in-house objectives and standards. This evaluation should be incorporated in the planning process.



#### 4. FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY

The fiscal management of the projects must demonstrate accountability, conformance to relevant federal fiscal requirements, and the ability to provide an explicit basis for project planning, monitoring, and evaluation designed to achieve cost-effective and quality service to farmworkers.

- 4.1 State vocational rehabilitation agencies should be able to relate and document the direct relationship of expenditures of project funds to project activity.
- 4.2 Financial records should clearly identify state match for federal funds and include a method for evaluating in-kind contributions in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.
- 4.3 Project management information systems should include a fiscal component adequate to provide an objective basis for ongoing monitoring and management of performance, periodic planning and evaluation in accordance with the performance standards for the farmworker service projects.



## 5. DIRECT SERVICE OUTCOMES

Farmworker service projects should, to the extent possible, provide efficient rehabilitation for farmworkers. Projects should provide services in an equitable fashion to subpopulation groups among farmworkers. Effectiveness will be assessed in light of each project's particular pattern of service or "client mix," and appropriate local conditions which are presumed to affect performance. Performance standards include the traditional measures of acceptance rate (proportion of total applicants who become active cases) and the rehabilitation rate (the proportion of active cases successfully rehabilitated).

- 5.1 The impact of farmworker service projects should be measured, in part, by their overall rate of success in rehabilitating farmworkers, as determined by:
  - 1) Ratio of rehabilitated clients to clients closed from plan status.
  - 2) The acceptance rate -- the ratio of clients accepted for service to total closed cases (including those closed without being accepted for service).
- 5.2 The direct service impact of farmworker service projects should be measured, in part, by client assessment of the positive or negative impacts of participation in program activities such as evaluation, extended evaluation, medical restoration, and training, in addition to standard measures of success.
- 5.3 The direct service impact of farmworker service projects should be measured, in part, by ability to achieve success in equitably serving farmworker subpopulations such as women, monolinguals, migrants, and the seriously handicapped.
- 5.4 The overall impact of farmworker service projects should be assessed taking into account the cost-effectiveness with which they achieve project outcomes as both total project costs and federal costs.
- 5.5 The overall impact and cost-effectiveness of farmworker service projects should be assessed, taking into account the variables of client population mix, local socioeconomic conditions, and available resources which are presumed to have a significant impact on difficulty of service delivery.





## 6. CAPACITY BUILDING OUTCOMES

The farmworker service projects should build state vocational rehabilitation agencies' capabilities to provide increased levels of service and quality of service to farmworkers.

- 6.1 The capacity-building impact of farmworker service projects should be measured, in part, by increases in levels and quality of service to farmworkers by state vocational rehabilitation agencies, taking into account individual capacity-building objectives, levels of federal support received, and continuity of support.
- 6.2 The capacity-building impact of farmworker service projects should be assessed, in part, by their success in developing innovative or especially effective service delivery models.



## B. RATIONALE FOR THE EVALUATION STANDARDS

Program planning efforts were included in the evaluation for a number of reasons. The emphasis on planning stems, in part, from the need to adapt traditional approaches to vocational rehabilitation to the special needs of farmworkers. Also, the legislation requires that performance be evaluated in relation to "stated goals," (the outcome of the planning process). With extremely limited financial resources available for program delivery, good planning is critical.

Service delivery strategies were also a focus since the Section 312 program identifies a target population which is distinguished by language, culture, education, income, and pattern of disabilities, from the population at large. We also attempted to determine whether any of these strategies involved adaptations of regular service delivery methods or innovative approaches.

Management activities by state vocational rehabilitation agencies were examined as part of the overall evaluation, because many proposed goals committed state agencies to management efforts to improve service delivery such as staff development or project evaluation. Management issues were also addressed because management support for projects was expected to be a crucial factor in the success of service delivery initiatives where staff and financial resources were very limited. Of particular concern was the legislative mandate for coordination at the local level. Although financial management assumed only a secondary focus, the evaluation also addressed the question of grantee accountability for federal funds in response to the regulatory provisions of EDGAR.

Direct service outcomes were examined in some detail, using traditional measures (e.g., ratio of rehabilitations to total number of clients accepted for service), clients' assessment of services provided, and project staff and counselors' perceptions regarding quality of service. In reviewing direct service outcomes, states' successes in serving particular subpopulations of handicapped farmworkers (youth/adults, men/women, non-English speaking/English speaking) was also examined.



Finally, the capacity-building standards in the evaluation relate to the states' success in using Section 312 funds to build statewide capabilities to serve farmworkers effectively. This capacity-building deserved attention, both because several states included this as a grant objective and because the policy assumption has been that limited funding for discretionary and/or innovative projects should support strategies for achieving medium- or long-term objectives of institutional change, in this case, improved service to migrant and seasonal farmworkers.

### C. RESEARCH PLAN

The general outlines of the evaluation design were established by the Office of Evaluation within RSA which, at the inception of the evaluation, had focused attention on several issues, including the following:

- o Characteristics of the MSFW's served by Section 312 projects and unique services needed
- o Patterns of service, especially outreach
- o Extent of coverage of the projects
- o Current organization, management, and staffing of Section 312 projects
- o Coordination with other service providers
- o Utility of an experimental system to track migrants

From its inception, the evaluation design also included surveying clients in 4 selected states (California, Florida, Illinois, and Texas) in order to secure information from them on their program experience. This design specification had the advantage of including states in each of the major geographical regions of migrant and seasonal farmworkers in the U.S., the Eastern Migrant Stream, the Midwestern Migrant Stream, and the Western U.S. Particular attention was to be given to each of the 4 "survey states" with interviews including VR counselors in the projects, the Project Directors, and the State Directors of the VR agencies in these states.





## Literature Review

An initial literature review, including an on-line search by the National Rehabilitation Information Center, revealed that there was very little published information on the rehabilitation of MSFW's. Virtually the only literature consisted of an initial needs assessment sponsored by RSA (Cortes, 1974) and conference reports from annual meetings of Section 312 grantees sponsored by RSA. Major areas covered in the initial literature review were: a) general and occupational health factors contributing to MSFW disability, b) patterns of disability, c) labor force experience and barriers to rehabilitation, d) MSFW demographics and geographical distribution, e) development of the Section 312 program from 1974 to 1985.

## Project Advisory Committee

A Project Advisory Committee was established which included vocational rehabilitation professionals familiar with service to MSFW's, a representative from the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation agencies, a data analyst from the migrant education tracking system, and the researcher who had conducted the original 1974 needs analysis for RSA prior to the establishment of the Section 312 program.

## Development of the Conceptual Framework

Based on the legislative requirements for program evaluation, set forth in Section 14(a), the Office of Evaluation's priorities, and the literature review, major research areas were defined. These included the following topic/research areas:

Client Characteristics The effect of language, education, migrancy, type of disability, severity of disability, and sex of client on access to services, services received, and outcome

Project Settings The effect of known factors affecting service delivery in rural areas--transportation, labor market, institutional resources, including educational institutions, and health care delivery systems, on VR service delivery



Service Strategies Problems faced by Section 312 projects in serving MSFW's, strategies developed to address these issues, and innovations (if any)

Services Delivered Types of services received by Section 312 clients and any variations in access to services among subpopulations of MSFW's

Organizational Capacity-Building Impacts of Section 312 funding on state VR agencies' capabilities to serve MSFW's

Impact on Clients Impact of services as characterized by clients, by program staff, and as documented in program records

Management and Administration of Projects Planning, staffing, implementation, and in-house evaluation of services to MSFW's.

An initial set of research hypotheses, relating to each of these dimensions of the evaluation design, were presented to the Technical Advisory Committee for their consideration.

Several important issues emerged from this meeting. Most important among them were: a) the diversity of objectives encompassed by Section 312 projects and b) limitations on the accessibility of MIS data generated by the RSA-300 system, and c) program contact with handicapped MSFW's closed prior to acceptance for VR service (status 08 closures).

Project objectives fell into three major types: a) use of Section 312 funds for VR staff, b) use of Section 312 funds for purchased client services, and c) use of Section 312 funds for both. Because of this variation in objectives, the primary definition of "project" as "activities supported by federal funds" was clarified to include only those areas where there was a significant project impact attributable to federal funding (i.e. an MSFW caseload of at least 5 clients), excluding from the evaluation, the occasional purchase of case services for MSFW's charged to the Section 312 grant in those states using funding entirely for purchased case services.

The primary limitation on MIS data determined at this time was that complete RSA-300/911 MIS data was not maintained as a separate database for Section 312 projects. While total numbers served were reported annually to RSA, information was not regularly crosstabulated. In addition, the state Project Directors on the Advisory Committee emphasized the difficulty of following up on MSFW's after program participation because of their mobility.



MSFW cases in state VR agency MIS records who had not been accepted for VR services were included in the client sample since their program experience involved an intervention (e.g. referral to other services, informal counseling) even if major VR services were not provided. This group while, technically not clients, were, for these reasons, included in the survey of clients.

### Design of Data Collection Instruments

Data collection instruments were designed subsequently, to generate the data required in each of the research areas. Interview protocols for semi-structured interviews with state VR agency staff, Section 312 Project Directors, and counseling staff, were designed to address the relevant issue areas: to explore service delivery strategy, to define management/organizational structures and procedures, and to profile each project.

Interviews with RSA regional staff were designed to concentrate on the grant management and program issues relevant to the administration of the project.

Because the migrant and seasonal farmworker population is not highly literate, survey instruments were designed to be administered by bilingual/bicultural paraprofessional staff from farmworker service agencies. The client questionnaires were designed to collect data in the following crucial areas:

- o Services actually received by respondents and characterization of benefits from VR services, overall satisfaction, problems experienced, and resolution of those problems
- o Work experience, labor force participation, occupational interests
- o Type of disability and causes of disability
- o Background data on language use and migrancy, reliance on public assistance





Comparable data was to be collected in interviews with handicapped MSFW's who had not received services; however instead of exploring program experience (since this group had not received services) data was collected to analyze why the respondent had not received services. Data collection instruments were available in English and Spanish because of the large proportion of respondents who were limited in English.

### Data Collection

To effectively evaluate the Section 312 projects, information was collected from individuals involved in administration and service delivery as well as recipients, or potential recipients, of these services. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with vocational rehabilitation clients served by the Section 312 projects, handicapped farmworkers who were not clients, project counseling staff and management, and RSA grant officers in the regional offices. In addition, data from the grantees' management information systems were collected to evaluate program performance and to add additional information to the clients interviews.

Eleven Section 312 projects were funded in FY '85 and FY '86 (one each in California, Florida, Illinois, Idaho, Washington, Utah, Colorado, New York, Virginia, and two in Texas). Particular attention was given to projects in California, Florida, Illinois, and Texas because of the large concentration of MSFW's and Section 312 project clients in these states. In these four states, Section 312 clients, unserved handicapped farmworkers, and state Vocational Rehabilitation agency staff were interviewed. Migrant project directors, counselors and staff in the four survey states and the seven non-survey states were interviewed, as were RSA regional staff.

### Interviews with Project Administration and Service Delivery Personnel

Wherever possible, staff were interviewed in local field offices; site visits included 32 of the 41 field offices where Section 312 projects operated. Interviews included 37 counseling staff, 33 of them counselors, and four rehabilitation technicians or counseling assistants, 84% of the counseling personnel working in Section 312 projects. Two non-project offices



in farmworker areas (which were previous Section 312 offices) were also visited. Site visits also included discussions with area or regional supervisors in four of the states.

Project managers were interviewed in all Section 312 states; in two states, former project directors were also interviewed. Vocational rehabilitation agency administrative representatives were interviewed in the four survey states (California, Florida, Illinois, and Texas).

RSA Grant Officers were interviewed in seven of the eight federal regions where Section 312 projects were funded. In regions where responsibility for grant management was shared by two staff (Regions II, VI, and X), the interviews were conducted with both staffers.

#### Interviews with Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers

Client interviews were conducted in the four survey states (California, Florida, Texas, and Illinois). Sampling frames for each state were constructed from all cases in project files who had applied for, or received, vocational rehabilitation services from the Section 312 projects at any time during the year prior to the sampling date (May 30, 1986 for California, June 30, 1986 for Illinois, and September 30, 1986 for Florida and Texas). In this manner, the sampling frames (574 clients in California, 117 clients in Illinois, 78 clients in Florida, and 424 clients in Texas) represented as wide a cross-section of clients as possible, including both current and inactive clients.

Once the sampling frames were constructed, the samples for each state were pulled. A total of sixty client interviews were to be conducted in each survey state. Based on an estimated response rate of 60%, a sample of approximately 100 clients was necessary to achieve the desired number of completed interviews. In Florida and Illinois, the entire sampling frame formed the sample. In California and Texas, samples were selected from the sampling frames using systematic sampling with a random start. For these states, secondary samples of 100 clients each were selected in the same manner as the primary sample. As necessary, clients were randomly selected from the



secondary sample to replace clients from the primary sample who were unable to be located or who refused to be interviewed.

Client interviews were conducted by interviewers from the local community. The majority of the interviewers were paraprofessional staff from farmworker service agencies (in California, Center for Employment Training, Monterey County Migrant Education, and Proteus Adult Training; in Illinois, the Illinois Migrant Council; the Texas Migrant Council in the Rio Grande Valley and the South Plains Health Providers in the Texas Panhandle). An interviewer training session was held in each state which covered the purpose of the survey, documentation and logistical procedures, and instructions for the administration of the questionnaire.

Surveys were conducted at times of the year when there would be the highest probability of successfully contacting migrants: July, in California (during the peak midsummer work season); August, in Illinois (when migrants had returned north); November, in Texas (at the end of the season, when migrants had returned south); and, in Florida, November through March (at the height of the winter work season).

Clients were sent introductory letters and then contacted by the interviewer to which they were assigned. Letters to Hispanic surname clients were sent with a Spanish and English version notifying the client that an interviewer would be contacting them and outlining the purpose of the interview. Due to the highly mobile nature of this population, clients were often difficult to locate. If possible, interviewers attempted to reach clients by telephone to schedule appointments. If this was not possible, the interviewer visited the client's home. Neighbors and VR counselors were asked for assistance in locating clients.

Table II-1 presents an analysis of client response rates. As is shown in this table, interviewers were fairly successful in locating clients (contact rates ranged from 46% to 70%). The response rates were also very high (ranging from 92% to 100%). However, these rates must be interpreted with caution in Texas and Florida as clients for whom there was no information (18 in Texas and 17 in Florida) were included in the "unable to locate category."





TABLE II-1

## ANALYSIS OF CLIENT RESPONSE RATES, BY STATE

	CALIFORNIA			ILLINOIS			TEXAS			FLORIDA		
	N	%	% OF SAMPLE	N	%	% OF SAMPLE	N	%	% OF SAMPLE	N	%	% OF SAMPLE
TOTAL NUMBER SERVED	574			117			424			78		
SAMPLE SIZE	123			117			122			78		
<b>CONTACTED CLIENTS</b>												
Interviews	59	94%	48%	82	100%	70%	77	92%	63%	36	95%	46%
Refusals	4	6%	3%	0			7	8%	6%	2	5%	3%
TOTAL	63	100%	51%	82	100%	70%	84	100%	69%	38	100%	49%
<b>NON-CONTACTED CLIENTS</b>												
Unable to Locate*	57	95%	46%	11	31%	9%	34	89%	28%	37	93%	47%
Left State	2	3%	2%	24	69%	21%	4	11%	3%	1	2%	1%
Died	1	2%	1%	0			0			2	5%	3%
TOTAL	60	100%	49%	35	100%	30%	38	100%	31%	40	100%	51%

\* This category includes clients for whom there is no information (18 in Texas and 17 in Florida)



To ensure that there was not a systematic difference between clients who were interviewed and those that were not, selected demographic and program variables (education level, age, major disability, and vocational rehabilitation status) were compared between these two groups in the four survey states. The only state in which these two groups were significantly different on any of the selected variables was California. In this state, those who were interviewed were significantly more likely to be less well educated than those who were not interviewed. Of the 59 interviews conducted in California, 61% of the clients had an eighth grade education or less, 34% had attended some high school, and five percent had 12 or more years of education. This distribution was significantly different ( $p=.02$ ) from the educational attainment of the clients not interviewed. Only 40% of these individuals had eight years of education or less, while 54% had attended some high school, and 6% had twelve or more years of education.

Clients interviewed in California were also significantly different ( $p=.02$ ) from those not interviewed in terms of their primary disability. The most notable differences were that those not interviewed were much more likely to suffer from psychiatric disorders than those interviewed (36% vs. 17%) and were less frequently "other disabilities" (11% vs. 24%).

Interviews with handicapped farmworkers not served by the program were also conducted. Due to the lack of accurate and complete data on the unserved population, it was not possible to accurately estimate the universe or to construct a sampling frame. Therefore, a purposive sample of eligible, but unserved, handicapped farmworkers in the communities served by the Section 312 projects were interviewed. Each of these individuals were screened to determine that they were vocationally handicapped, MSFW's or dependents, and labor force participants (not retired or totally disabled). A total of 24 handicapped MSFW's not receiving program services were interviewed, 14 in California, six in Illinois, and four in Texas.



## Information from Project Management Information Systems

Information on project performance and client characteristics was secured from RSA-300 data maintained by state VR agencies. Eight of the eleven projects (California, Illinois, Texas, Texas Commission for the Blind, Florida, New York, Colorado, and Idaho) responded to standardized requests for information. This information was used to generate the national and state profiles of Section 312 projects. Three of the projects (Washington, Utah, and Virginia) responded with tabular data which is not fully comparable. The requested and available MIS data are presented as Tables II-2 and II-3.

TABLE II-2  
REQUESTED MIS INFORMATION

VARIABLE	DESCRIPTION	VARIABLE	DESCRIPTION
OFFICE	Project office	REFPA	Public assistance at referral
STATUS	VR status code	REFSUPP	Primary support at referral
MAJORDIS	Major disability	MISLANG	Primary language
REFDATE	Referral date	SEVDIS	Severity of disability
REFSOURC	Referral source	CLOWORK	Work status at closure
AGE	Age in Years	CLOWAGE	Weekly salary at closure
SEX	Sex	CLOPA	Public assistance at closure
RACE	Race	CLOJOB	DOT code of job at closure
MARSTAT	Marital status	CLOREASN	Reason for closure
NUMDEP	Number of dependents	INPLAN	Months in plan
NUMFAM	Number in family	INTRAIN	Months in training
EDLEVEL	Educational attainment	APPWAIT	Months in status 00-02
REFWORK	Work status at referral		
REFWAGE	Weekly salary at referral		
REFAMIN	Monthly family income at referral		





TABLE II-3  
AVAILABLE MIS INFORMATION, BY STATE

VARIABLE	STATES							
	CA	IL	TX	FL	NY	CO	ID	TXB
OFFICE	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
STATUS	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
MAJORDIS	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
REFDATE	X	X	X	X		X		X
REFSOURC	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
AGE	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
SEX	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
RACE	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
APPWAIT	X	X	X	X				
MARSTAT	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
NUMDEP	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
NUMFAM	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
EDLEVEL	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
REFWORK	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
REFWAGE	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
REFAMIN	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
REFPA	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
REFSUPP	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
MISLANG	X	X		X				
SEVDIS	X	X	X	X		X		X
CLOWORK	X	X		X		X		X
CLOWAGE	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
CLOPA	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
CLOJOB	X	X		X		X		
CLOREASN	X	X		X		X	X	X
INPLAN	X	X	X	X				
INTRAIN	X	X	X	X				

KEY TO STATE ABBREVIATIONS:

CA = California  
 IL = Illinois  
 TX = Texas  
 FL = Florida  
 NY = New York  
 CO = Colorado  
 ID = Idaho  
 TXB = Texas Commission for the Blind



## Data Processing and Analysis

Because of the variations in state MIS tabulations, it was necessary to build a database and reenter RSA-300 data on Section 312 clients submitted by state VR agencies in a standardized format. The standardized state MIS database was created for 8 of the 11 projects, including all of the survey states. Data was only available in nonstandard formats from Utah, Virginia, and Washington. This data was tabulated for inclusion in analysis of overall program performance and client characteristics. MIS data from these three states was submitted in aggregate form and was not included in cross-tabulations since it was not possible to analyze it at the unit record level. Therefore, crosstabulations are based on the following 8 state projects (California, Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, New York, Texas (Blind), Texas Rehabilitation Commission).

MIS data analysis included tabulation of frequencies of all MIS variables, but also, crosstabulations on client characteristics and selected outcome measures. Data was also analyzed on a state-by-state basis and office-by-office to examine geographical variations among projects.

Interviews with project staff, management, and RSA regional staff were reviewed and reported in the context of state case studies, and in narrative on national patterns of service and strategies.

Data from interviews with MSFW clients was precoded for most questions; however, several items required postcoding. After postcoding, the interview data was merged with MIS data from project records and frequencies tabulated. Client interviews were analyzed by state (since the Section 312 program consists of separately funded projects) and by selected client characteristics to determine overall patterns of service to subpopulations among MSFW's.



### SECTION III: BACKGROUND: THE MIGRANT AND SEASONAL FARMWORKER POPULATION

#### A. INTRODUCTION

Migrant and seasonal farmworkers are not a homogeneous population; their main commonality is that they are at the margins of U.S. society. Virtually all MSFW's live in poverty, have low levels of educational achievement, work under dangerous conditions, and live in substandard housing. Most migrant and seasonal farmworkers belong to a minority ethnic group. Many speak only limited English.

There are great geographical differences in the composition of the farmworker labor force, seasonal pattern of work, and type of agricultural work from one area to another, due, in large measure to cropping patterns and patterns of agricultural ownership. Agriculture in the Western U.S. relies mostly on seasonal farmworkers, who work only in the communities where they reside. In contrast, agriculture in the Midwest and East relies more on migrant labor. The Midwestern and Western MSFW population is predominantly Hispanic of Mexican origin, while the Eastern Migrant stream has more Blacks and Puerto Ricans.

Federal agency definitions of migrant and seasonal farmworkers vary, but there is a "core" population of MSFW's as defined by the Department of Labor (DOL), and referenced in the Rehabilitation Act. This definition consists of workers whose primary occupation is farmwork, who usually work in non-supervisory positions in agriculture, and who are seasonally unemployed.<sup>7</sup> Federal programs targeted to MSFW's regularly include MSFW dependents, spouses and children, many of whom also are workers, and who experience some of the same health problems, lack of career awareness, and educational deficits as farmworker heads of household.

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<sup>7</sup> The Department of Labor definition of the MSFW target population is found at 20 CFR, Section 633. It excludes both "casual" hired farm labor, who have worked less than 25 days in agriculture, and permanent hired farm labor. For this reason, standard Census data, which include all hired farm laborers, are not a useful source of information on the MSFW population.





DOL Program eligibility also requires that MSFW's work primarily in agriculture during a 12-month period of the previous 24 months. However, the 24 month limitation does not include the time a MSFW may have been disabled, thereby affording equitable access to MSFW's who may have been unemployed due to their disability for an indefinite period of time. The issues pertaining to the definition of MSFW's are discussed in detail in Appendix A. The complexity of the issues lies not so much in describing the "core" population of highly disadvantaged MSFW's as in the ability to utilize a standard source of statistical data to profile and count MSFW's.

Migrant and seasonal farmworkers are identified as a special target population for both vocational rehabilitation and other employment-oriented programs because their labor force experience is characterized by job instability and periodic unemployment. A recent survey shows that the average farmworker, at least in the Western U.S., is unemployed an average of 21 weeks per year.<sup>8</sup> Unemployment, more than low wages, contributes to MSFW's being among the largest group of working poor in the country.

Access to the usual fringe benefits, which most U.S. workers take for granted, such as unemployment insurance, state disability insurance, Workers' compensation, health insurance, and retirement benefits, is uneven from state to state. Farmworkers who cannot work, either temporarily, or permanently, have virtually no safety net. Older or disabled farmworkers who may be able to work, but with greatly reduced productivity, cannot compete with younger workers in prime physical condition for many of the available jobs and experience. As time goes on, they experience steadily increasing periods of unemployment.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Phillip Martin and Richard Mines, A Profile of California Farmworkers, University of California, 1986. This study is based on an excellent 1983 survey co-sponsored by the California Employment Development Department and the University of California. It has the most detailed information available on MSFW work patterns, earnings, and labor market experience. Although Martin and Mines study only surveyed MSFW's in California, the growing season in the state is one of the longest in the nation, suggesting that MSFW's in other areas may experience even higher levels of unemployment. Anecdotal information from migrant agency staff in Texas suggests that Midwestern migrants may work about 18 weeks a year.

<sup>9</sup> Martin and Mines, p. 11.



Older farmworkers (40 and over) are somewhat fatalistic about their lot, believing that there is little chance that they personally will "get ahead," but working ferociously in the hope of allowing their children an opportunity to escape from the cycle of poverty.

### Numbers of Farmworkers

Estimates of the national population of migrant and seasonal farmworkers vary widely, ranging from low estimates in the order of 1.3 million persons to high estimates around 6 million persons. The divergence is, in part, definitional as the higher estimates tend to include more casual hired farm labor, farm owners, and workers in agriculturally-related industries.<sup>10</sup>

E.H. White and Company estimates of MSFW populations refer to the "core" MSFW population, namely the highly disadvantaged, largely minority, labor force and their families captured by the DOL definition. This population numbers approximately 1.7 million persons.<sup>11</sup>

Migrant and seasonal farmworkers have an elevated incidence of disability, in large measure due to occupationally-caused injuries and illnesses.

The national statistic which most closely approximates the disability rate of MSFW's is the 1978 Social Security Administration Survey of Disability

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<sup>10</sup> At a 1985 Farmworker Conference sponsored by the National Governors' Association no less than 18 recommendations addressed definitional and census issues. Unfortunately, none of these recommendations have led to the necessary changes either to standardize federal agency definitions or to improve 1990 Census data on MSFW's.

<sup>11</sup> Our estimate is based on three primary sources: 1977 Social Security Administration data, 1980 USDA Quarterly data on hired farmworkers, and 1985 Migrant Health estimates. Appendix A provides a detailed discussion of the basis for these estimates, including a review of available data sources and data quality issues relevant to the disparate sources of data on migrant and seasonal farmworker populations. Other factors considered include the degree of mechanization in different areas and crops in the past several years, local changes in the agricultural economy (e.g., in the Rio Grande Valley) and migrant health clinic use data where available.



and Work which shows that 16.8% of the civilian nonwhite labor force experienced an occupational or severe limitation caused by disability. Michael Cortes' 1973 survey of farmworker households, the only study to directly examine the disability rate in the MSFW population nationally, showed a 31% rate of disability among heads of households. We believe that the somewhat lower figure of 25% is the best estimate of the rate of vocational handicaps among farmworkers. Given these rates of disability, approximately 340,000 MSFW's nationally are handicapped.<sup>12</sup>

Assuming this rate, there are at least 280,000 vocationally handicapped MSFW labor force participants and another 60,000 handicapped family members (assuming a 10% rate of disability among this group).

#### Numbers of Migrants

There are most probably somewhere between 300,000 and 500,000 migrants in the MSFW population, about one-third of the total population. Contrary to popular belief, migrants' do not "wander" in search of work, but establish a stable migratory work pattern whenever possible; that pattern is generally disrupted only by changes in labor market demand.

Understanding the peak MSFW population of a state is important to social service delivery planning since the migrant population may require services both as they work in the north, but also as they return to their homes. Estimates of the volume of the migrant streams vary even more extremely than estimates of the overall MSFW population, but the E.H. White and Company state-by-state estimates of MSFW's in Table III-1 are consistent with a

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<sup>12</sup> The Cortes figure includes secondary limitations and temporary disabilities among the occupationally limited group. But Cortes also gives a breakdown for respondents whose ability to live independently is "limited but independent" (7%) which allows us to assume a rate of severe and occupational handicaps is at least 25%. An excellent discussion of the Howards and Brehm (1977) study of disability and labor force participation is found in (Nicholls (1979); this discussion notes that local economic conditions affect rates of severe handicap. A major study, The California Disability Survey also noted higher disability rates in rural areas than in urban areas. These factors explain, in part, the very elevated rate of disability among MSFW's surveyed by Cortes.







Texas-based migrant labor force consisting of 150-250,000 persons, and a Florida-based migrant labor force of 50-80,000 persons.<sup>13</sup>

It is probably more important to recognize migratory patterns than to know the exact numbers of migrant farmworkers because there are year-to-year shifts in exact numbers. From a service planning perspective, it is most important to recognize that the migrant pattern swells the winter populations of south Texas and south Florida, which are major homebase areas for migrants whose primary earnings are from summer work in "upstream" states.

E.H. White and Company interviews and an excellent economic study of the Rio Grande Valley economy<sup>14</sup> show that available winter farmwork in Texas has fallen off considerably since the 1983 freeze, having a major impact on this very large MSFW population. The Western MSFW population includes a substantial proportion of "international" migrants, both legal U.S. residents and undocumented workers who return to Mexico in the winter.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Edward Dement notes in Out of Sight, Out of Mind, National Governors' Association, 1985, that the USDA figures on the migrant labor force for 1979 (217,000) and 1981 (115,000) are so divergent that the USDA itself has acknowledged that the latter figure is in error. Dement also notes that state estimates of migrants for Florida (100-300,000) and Texas (376,000) are not compatible with the USDA figures. Earlier estimates of numbers of migrants, which are higher, suggest that even the 217,000 figure for migrants may be somewhat low. Migrant Health estimates are very much higher, estimating almost 600,000 migrants.

<sup>14</sup> Cardenas et. al, Recovery from the 1983 Freeze, Texas Employment Commission, 1984

<sup>15</sup> Estimates of undocumented farmworkers vary as widely as other data on MSFW's. Martin and Mines 1983 survey of California farmworkers showed that 20% of the labor force was undocumented. It is generally believed that undocumented workers include a disproportionate amount of young, single men who are not likely to require, or at least seek, VR services. Although the undocumented MSFW's may be less often disabled than native-born MSFW's, it is likely that the legalization program under the Immigration Reform and Control Act will significantly increase demand for VR among migrant and seasonal farmworkers from 1988 on if the amnesty program achieves the projected level of 350,000 MSFW's or more. Kearney and Mines (1982) findings show that newly arrived MSFW's have higher health needs than other MSFW's, suggesting that need for VR services among newly legalized families may also be higher than assumed. Most of these newly legalized MSFW's are likely to be in California, Florida, and Texas, although other states will have large populations of newly legalized urban Latinos.



## B. PATTERNS OF FARMWORKER DISABILITY

Patterns of farmworker disability are significantly different from those found among the general population of vocational rehabilitation clients. Although it is more than 15 years old, the Interstate Research Associates (IRA) 1972 survey of a national sample of farmworker households provides the best data on types of disability experienced by MSFW's.<sup>16</sup> However, a recent study of the occupational health of MSFW's conducted for the Office of Migrant Health<sup>17</sup> provides additional valuable data based on reports by migrant health clinics and a comprehensive review of the existing literature. E.H. White and Company data from the present study presents some additional information on patterns of disability; however, these data are not necessarily representative of patterns of disability among the farmworker population at large, because the interview sample included only those handicapped MSFW's who had contacted state VR agencies.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Michael Cortes, Handicapped Migrant Farmworkers HEW, 1974. The Cortes survey consisted of a national probability sample and, therefore, is more representative of overall patterns of disability than the E.H. White survey. The data consists of respondent reports without confirming medical diagnosis and, thus, may differ somewhat from the population of VR-eligible farmworkers. There are some changes in MSFW socioeconomic status in the time since the survey, but the occupational risk factors implicated in MSFW disability are not likely to have changed significantly since the point at which the Cortes survey was conducted.

<sup>17</sup> Valerie Wilk, The Occupational Health of Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers in the United States, Farmworker Justice Fund, Inc, 1986. This study relies on information from many other researchers' studies, and migrant clinic databases. Although the data reported by Wilk stems from studies with widely differing methodologies, sampling frames, and time periods, it is the most thorough study to date. Another excellent study of MSFW health status is Michael Kearney and Richard Mines' The Health of Tulare County Farmworkers, University of California, Riverside, 1982. This study is one of the best ethnographic profiles of MSFW's and includes important data on employment patterns, occupational health risks, and health facility utilization although the study areas was geographically limited.

<sup>18</sup> The E.H. White and Company survey included the clients of MSFW projects in California, Texas, Illinois, and Florida. Since different projects' outreach networks affected the composition of handicapped MSFW's contacting the VR agency, the disabilities experienced by respondents are not necessarily representative of those in the MSFW population nationally. Patterns of disability found among project clients is discussed in depth in Section II of this report.





## Overall Disability Rate

Thirty-one percent of migrant and seasonal farmworkers interviewed in IRA's 1973 national sample were disabled. Twenty-three percent were limited in their ability to work and 8% were totally disabled.<sup>19</sup> The definition of disability used in the IRA study, however, included temporarily disabled workers in addition to the chronically disabled population served by vocational rehabilitation programs. Therefore, we estimate that the actual incidence of vocationally-handicapped MSFW's is closer to 25%. It deserves mention, however, that this incidence is more than 50% higher than the 16.8% rate of vocational disability among the civilian nonwhite labor force.<sup>20</sup>

## Occupational Health and MSFW Disability

A large proportion of MSFW handicaps are occupationally-related. Table III-1 presents the causes of disabilities as reported by the handicapped clients interviewed by E.H. White and Company. As can be seen from this table, 32% of all farmworker disabilities are work-related. It is possible that the highest rate of work-related injuries and illnesses, 50%, which is found in California, may relate to the degree of mechanization as well as program outreach efforts (which resulted in the constituents of the caseload when the E.H. White study was done). Men's rates of work-related disabilities are higher than women's in all states except Illinois, where the overall proportion of work-related disabilities is relatively low for both men and women. The proportion of work-related disabilities also increases with age. Work-related disabilities among the 20-30 age group (32%) increases to 39% among those 40 years of age and older.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Cortes (1974), p.52.

<sup>20</sup> Table 1.B.4 "Levels of Work Disability Among Persons 18-64 by Age, Sex, and Race: Civilian Non-Institutionalized Population, Summer 1978", p.33 Digest of Data on Persons with Disabilities

<sup>21</sup> Crosstabulations of Q.39 by age and sex. E.H. White and Company survey.





TABLE III-1  
CAUSES OF MSFW DISABILITY

	CALIFORNIA		ILLINOIS		TEXAS		FLORIDA		TOTAL	
	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
TOTAL	47	(100%)	79	(100%)	75	(100%)	27	(100%)	228	(100%)
DISABLED BY WORK ACCIDENT	22	38%	10	12%	13	17%	5	19%	50	21%
DISABLED BY WORK ILLNESS	7	12%	12	15%	5	7%	3	11%	27	11%
DISABLED BY NON-WORK ACC.	7	12%	7	9%	6	8%	6	22%	26	11%
DISABLED BY NON-WORK ILL.	3	23%	34	43%	44	56%	10	37%	91	43%
CONGENITAL	4	7%	11	14%	5	7%	2	7%	22	9%
OTHER*/NEC	4	8%	5	7%	2	5%	1	4%	12	5%

SOURCE: E.H. White and Company Survey, 1986, Question 39. (N=238)

\* "Other" includes respondents who stated they were not disabled, as well as responses that were vague or could not be classified.

More than two-thirds of MSFW's (69%) said that they had received adequate immediate treatment for their disability. The needs of the remaining (less than) one-third, some of whom did not receive any medical treatment for their disability, must be addressed by VR agencies when the MSFW seeks assistance in rehabilitation.

MSFW's in Texas reported the highest levels of medical attention for their disability (83%), while California reported the lowest (48%) suggesting that the concentration of migrant health clinics in the Rio Grande Valley may have improved Texas MSFW's access to medical care.



In general, farmworkers are at risk for the same disabilities as the population at large, with a "surplus" disability rate caused by worse than average working conditions. There may, however, also be a surplus of non-occupational disabilities among migrant and seasonal farmworker families. The East Coast Migrant Head Start Project reports a 16% rate of disabilities among migrant children in their Head Start programs<sup>22</sup>, compared with an incidence of disability of 3.9% in the general population 0-17 years of age.<sup>23</sup> Pesticide exposure is also suspected of causing increased incidence of birth defects among MSFW's, but the epidemiological data is still sparse.<sup>24</sup>

### Types of Disability

#### 1. Musculoskeletal and Orthopedic Disabilities

Among handicapped farmworkers, orthopedic disabilities, including arthritis and back pain, are a leading cause of farmworker disability. Thirty-seven percent of respondents reported back pain of some sort and 44% found it impossible or extremely difficult to stoop, bend, or kneel. A slightly lower proportion, 34%, found it difficult to lift or carry weights of ten pounds or to remain standing for long periods.<sup>25</sup>

Data reported by Wilk confirms this assessment. Musculoskeletal problems are reported as the leading health problem of 20-25% of migrant farmworkers

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<sup>22</sup> Telephone conversation, October 21, 1986, Sister Geraldine O'Brien, Director, East Coast Migrant Head Start. O'Brien's figure is based on program records for children enrolled in Headstart.

<sup>23</sup> Table I.B.1, 1984 Digest of Data on Persons with Disabilities.

<sup>24</sup> A study (Schwartz et al, 1980) conducted in Imperial County showed a fourfold increase in the rate of limb defects of children born to families where both parents were farmworkers. However, the overall incidence of birth defects was quite low--a perennial difficulty in such epidemiological studies. A seven-year nationwide study (Hunt and Harkness, 1980) showed women who had been exposed to pesticides to have more adverse reproductive histories as measured by five-minute Apgar scores, suspected neurological abnormalities at one-year, and low I.Q. at four years, in addition to increased fetal deaths and stillbirths.

<sup>25</sup> Cortes (1974), p. 50



treated in an upstate New York clinic.<sup>26</sup> Surveys in Wisconsin (1981), Michigan (1979), and Florida (1977) show similar rates of disability.<sup>27</sup> Because of the demands of farmwork, the functional limitations imposed by these disabilities constitute severe employment handicaps.

Agriculture is the second most dangerous occupation in the U.S., with 180,000 disabling injuries in 1983.<sup>28</sup> Although these data do not provide conclusive information on farmworkers' risks (since it includes forestry and fishing), Wilk's analysis of National Safety Council data<sup>29</sup> shows falls and accidents to be leading causes of disabling events among farmworkers. This is consistent with the elevated incidence of musculoskeletal disabilities.

Cortes' respondent reports also suggest musculoskeletal problems were occupationally-related. Fourteen percent of the respondents attributed their problems to work accidents, injuries, or falls. Hard physical work promotes degenerative joint disease and, not surprisingly, arthritis was mentioned as a health problem by a large number of Cortes' respondents.<sup>30</sup> Wilk reports that 17% of all health conditions reported by farmers and farm managers in the National Health Interview Survey were musculoskeletal and connective tissue diseases, a rate 50% above the national rate for all occupations combined.<sup>31</sup>

## 2. Visual Disabilities

Visual disabilities were also common among farmworkers, 7% of Cortes' respondents were blind.<sup>32</sup> Fifty six percent were reported to have uncorrected visual impairments. Although not all the visual impairments are likely to

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<sup>26</sup> SUNYAB (1984) discussed in Wilk (1986), p. 82,

<sup>27</sup> Wilk (1986), loc. cit.

<sup>28</sup> Wilk (1986), op.cit, p. 84

<sup>29</sup> Op. cit, p. 86

<sup>30</sup> Cortes (1974), p. 51

<sup>31</sup> Wilk (1986), p. 81. This data spans the period 1969-1977

<sup>32</sup> Cortes (1974), p. 50





constitute vocationally handicapping conditions, the rate of visual handicaps among farmworkers is probably higher than in the general population.

Diabetes and hypertension were the second and fourth most common diagnoses in migrant health centers in 1980 and were the second and third most common diagnoses in homebase migrant health centers surveyed by Hicks in 1982.<sup>33</sup> Uncontrolled diabetes is closely associated with diabetic retinopathy and is likely to lead to an elevated incidence of visual impairments in older farmworkers. The large proportion of diabetes among MSEW's relates to an elevated incidence among Mexican-Americans in Texas.<sup>34</sup> Hypertension is implicated in glaucoma and is probably associated with elevated incidence of glaucoma among farmworkers.<sup>35</sup> Both diabetic retinopathy and glaucoma are likely to result in substantial bilateral visual impairment which interferes with work ability.<sup>36</sup>

Pterygium is another important cause of visual impairment among farmworkers. It is an abnormal growth which may extend onto the cornea resulting from chronic exposure to wind and dust.<sup>37</sup> In a vision screening project by the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry, over 25% of farmworkers 45 years old and older failed because of pterygium.<sup>38</sup>

Pesticide exposure, particularly in accidents mixing or loading pesticides, is a health risk likely to result in a number of visual disabilities.

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<sup>33</sup> Wilk (1986), p. 14

<sup>34</sup> Hanis et al., "Diabetes Among Mexican Americans in Starr County, Texas", American Journal of Epidemiology, November, 1985.

<sup>35</sup> Wilk (1986), p.

<sup>36</sup> Interview with Bill Agnell, Texas Commission for the Blind, November, 1986

<sup>37</sup> Wilk (1986), p. 77

<sup>38</sup> loc. cit.,



### 3. Psychological Disabilities

A large proportion of respondents to the Cortes study (29%) reported that nervousness, tension, anxiety and depression interfered with their ability to work. A survey of over 1,800 Tulare County farmworkers showed the same rate of mental health problems (29%) making it the leading health problem for the population.<sup>39</sup> For the MSFW population, mental illness is closely related to stress, but differences in cultural mores, work demands, and support mechanisms make comparisons of farmworker reports and medical or VR diagnostic categories difficult.<sup>40</sup>

There is little information on the severity or types of psychological disabilities among MSFW's, largely because mental health resources are so limited. However, a 1984 survey of 109 migrant families (in 9 states) for the U.S. Department of Education's Project HAPPIER (Health Awareness Patterns Preventing Illness and Encouraging Responsibility) stated that in 23% of the families surveyed, a family member suffered from depression as a major illness.<sup>41</sup> This level is very high. If results are comparable, over half of the 44.5% of the MSFW families with one or more handicapped members might be expected to experience a psychological disability.

The 1978 President's Commission on Mental Health Migrant Task Force, using a model derived from social epidemiology, estimates that the farmworker rate of affective psychoses was 1.5 time higher than the rate in the lower middle class; the rate of psychoses due to substance abuse is estimated to be elevated by a factor of three, and organic psychoses occur at rates more than five times the norm.<sup>42</sup> The psychiatrist, Robert Coles, in his 1969 testimony before the Senate Committee stated that the special psychiatric problems faced by migrants included extreme confusion, disorientation, and depression.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Kearney and Mines, p. 19

<sup>40</sup> Kearney observes that sources of stress vary among different subgroups of farmworkers.

<sup>41</sup> op.cit., p. 15

<sup>42</sup> Presidents' Commission on Mental Health, MSFW Panel, p. 1222

<sup>43</sup> op.cit. p. 1223



A survey of migrant health centers, conducted by the Commission in 1976, cited alcoholism, depression, and anxiety as leading mental health problems among farmworkers. Sixty-six percent of physicians surveyed felt that obtaining mental health services was a significant problem for farmworkers.<sup>44</sup>

Although there are definitional problems in relating these estimates of increased prevalence of psychosis to overall rates of psychological disability among vocational rehabilitation clients in general, it is very likely that farmworkers experience high rates of mental illness. It is also likely that, because of the lack of treatment facilities or programs, chronic mental illness results in a number of work related handicaps. The general feeling among farmworker social service agencies is that a high attachment to the labor force, family and community coping mechanisms and denial of psychiatric problems, contribute to a situation in which a farmworker will continue to work although they may be suffering a significant degree of psychological disability.<sup>45</sup>

In Utah, where the Division of Rehabilitation Services was particularly concerned with the issue of psychological disability and had diagnostic capabilities, 57% of the VR agency clients were accepted for VR services based on a psychological disability.<sup>46</sup>

The President's Commission on Mental Health report estimates alcoholism among farmworkers as being higher than in any other occupational category.<sup>47</sup>

Alcoholism has also been mentioned as a disabling condition by a number of programs but we have no information on the overall prevalence, or whether alcoholism constitutes a secondary disability, subsequent to the social and economic trauma of a primary disabling condition.

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<sup>44</sup> op. cit., p. 1226

<sup>45</sup> See also Valle and Vega (Eds.), Hispanic Natural Support Systems, State of California, Department of Mental Health, 1982.

<sup>46</sup> "Utah Handicapped Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers Project, Annual Progress Report, December 3, 1986.

<sup>47</sup> Commission, p. 1227





A number of studies suggest that there may be long-term psychological effects associated with exposure to organophosphate pesticides. The most recent and comprehensive study (Savage et al, 1982) reported highly significant differences between cases and controls in functioning on the Halstead-Reitan Battery (a test of psychological functioning).<sup>48</sup> Symptoms reported by relatives included depression, irritability, and confusion.

#### 4. Auditory Impairments

The Cortes study found that 16% of the respondents experienced auditory impairments.<sup>49</sup> This figure correlates quite well with the 11% of the families in the Project HAPPIER survey found to have hearing problems.<sup>50</sup> The high incidence of middle-ear infections among migrant and seasonal farmworkers explains, in part, the high incidence of deafness. Vocational rehabilitation agency caseloads do not, in any State, reflect a level of clients with auditory disabilities, quite possibly because the handicap is not, in some cases, recognized as a vocational handicap.

#### 5. Hernias, Gall Bladders, and Blood Pressure

Other conditions reported as farmworker disabilities are hernias and gall bladder problems. There is little additional information from migrant health clinics on these conditions since most of these clinics provide only primary care and do not report on surgical cases. However, the high number of hernias is consistent with the large amount of heavy lifting involved in farmwork. High blood pressure is also reported as a prevalent condition but is difficult to relate to vocational handicap because there is no information on severity.

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<sup>48</sup> Wilk (1986), p. 69

<sup>49</sup> Cortes (1974), p. 50

<sup>50</sup> (Trotter, 1984) cited in Wilk, p. 16



## 6. Mental Retardation

Several programs have reported high incidences of mental retardation among farmworker caseloads. Given the serious questions regarding the reliability of IQ instruments among the cultural, educational, and linguistic groups, it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions. There seems to be no additional data on the actual incidence of retardation among MSFW's.

### Socioeconomic Condition of Handicapped Farmworkers

Migrant and seasonal farmworkers are the paradigm case of a population where degree of handicap is a function of both actual disability and socioeconomic context. Migrant and seasonal farmworkers are handicapped by level of education, work experience, language, and lack of awareness of non-agricultural work from securing alternative employment. When a disability becomes so severe as to make continuing work in agriculture impossible, the barriers to employment faced by farmworkers are formidable since their skills are not easily transferable.

Continued work in available occupations which require minimal educational skills is often as demanding as farmwork. In addition, these jobs (many of them in construction, or service as waitresses, maids, or janitors) also tend to be seasonal and low paid. Disabled farmworkers are, thus, left with very limited employment options.

Migrant and seasonal farmworkers are very poor. Most have no health insurance, no savings, few assets, and no means of support except for work or reliance on family or friends. Most farmworkers' cultural mores involve a very strong work ethic which is intolerant of idleness. Therefore, many continue to work despite their disabilities, although their productivity (and earning power) has seriously declined.

The age distribution of disabled respondents in Cortes' study and in the Section 312 projects, together with the results of the 1986 E.H. White and Company survey, suggest that most farmworkers will continue to work for a long period of time after experiencing a disability, or after a progressively



worsening condition begins to interfere with their ability to work.<sup>51</sup> Many farmworkers will not acknowledge that they are disabled until after their children are "on their own" and the economic demands of feeding and housing a family have lessened.

### 1. Educational Levels

The average educational level of handicapped farmworkers in the 1973 Cortes study was 3.4 years.<sup>52</sup> Only 2% had completed high school. This is consistent with educational levels for the farmworker population as a whole. The 1980 Farmworker Data Network of 26,000 MSFW's intake records shows an average educational level of seven years. USDA figures show an average educational level of 6.2 years for Hispanic hired farm laborers, and 7.9 years for Blacks and others.<sup>53</sup> Levels for MSFW's are likely to be lower since the USDA database includes permanent farmworkers, farmers, and farm managers. Educational attainment also is likely to overstate educational competency among MSFW's. Educational levels for farmworker dependents are rising, but despite the positive impact of migrant education programs, the high school dropout rate remains high.<sup>54</sup>

The educational attainment of older farmworkers (40 years old or more) who began school in the early 1950's is much lower than younger farmworkers. This is consistent with the lower levels of education found by Cortes in 1973.

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<sup>51</sup> Chapter II, "Labor Force Participation and Migrancy" of the Martin-Mines survey provides a good overview of MSFW's changing work tasks in agriculture, as age and disability interfere with the ability to meet physical demands.

<sup>52</sup> Cortes (1974), p. 58

<sup>53</sup> Jackson and Pollock, Tables 4 and 5, pp. 28-30

<sup>54</sup> Agricultural Occupations Data Tape, California Human Development Corporation. Table 4 data shows that 1980 MSFW high school dropout rates were around 70% (65% for California, 75% for Texas, and 64% for Florida)





## 2. Ethnicity

Migrant and seasonal farmworkers are predominantly ethnic minorities.<sup>55</sup> The largest proportion of MSFW's are Hispanic (around 55%), while the second largest group is Black (around 30%). The remaining 15% are White, Native American or Asian. Ethnic and racial composition varies greatly from state to state. Therefore, state or regional data on ethnicity of farmworker populations is more meaningful than national data.

Farmworkers in the Midwestern and Western U.S. are predominantly Hispanic of Mexican extraction. In the Eastern United States, the MSFW population includes a large proportion of Black seasonal workers. The Eastern Migrant stream, in addition to U.S Blacks, includes significant numbers of Puerto Ricans and Haitians, as well as some Mexican migrants. Because farm labor recruitment is often based on networks of family and friends, the very heterogenous population includes small pockets of culturally distinct populations, e.g., East Indian farmworkers in Sutter County, California; Kanjobal Maya in south-Central Florida. Some migration patterns are very stable, particularly the midwestern migrant stream where families from specific Texas towns migrate to specific northern areas for the summer. The result is that both in upstream and in homebase states, there are clusters of closely linked farmworker families.

## 3. Economic Status of the Overall MSFW Population

Migrant and seasonal farmworkers are among the poorest groups in the country. The average family income of farmworkers surveyed in the 1980 Farmworker Data Network Study is \$3,025. Migrant family incomes were somewhat lower than other MSFW's, being only \$2,698. Average family sizes for the families surveyed in 1980 (who were younger and had more children than the disabled MSFW's surveyed by E.H. White and Company) was 3.94. Families were well below the poverty guidelines, assuming a normal distribution of income and family size.

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<sup>55</sup> p.28, "The Farmworker in the U.S.", The Farmworker Data Network, 1980.



USDA reports annual earnings in agriculture<sup>56</sup> (based on 1980 Census Data) for male Hispanic farmworkers was \$1,867, while Black males average earnings were \$1,442, and Hispanic women's earnings in farmwork were \$590. Annual earnings for teenage workers (14-17) were \$482 (all races combined). In a family where husband, wife, and one teenage child works, family income would be around \$3,000. This figure is consistent with the Farmworker Data Network figures for annual family income, since each family includes multiple wage earners.

The main reason for low MSFW family incomes is the seasonality of farm labor. The Martin and Mines 1983 survey of California farmworkers provides the most detailed information available on work patterns. The average male head of household worked 26 weeks in farmwork, supplemented that income with 3 weeks of non-farm work, and was unemployed 21 weeks. Although other family members also worked, they experienced even greater seasonality of employment. Married women were unemployed 34 weeks a year. Half of the teenagers 14-17 worked, but probably were employed for less than eight weeks per year.

Based on the expected unemployment of over 28 weeks for farmworker heads of household and minimum wage levels in the rest of the country, primary wage earners' income in other areas has probably not risen much beyond \$3,800, a 5% annual increase since 1980, leaving MSFW's economic status unchanged.<sup>57</sup>

#### 4. Economic Status of Handicapped MSFW's

Cortes' study of disabled farmworkers showed that the average family income of the group surveyed was \$3,767 per year, but the cash earnings of disabled farmworkers was only \$661 per year. The range of incomes was large, with the poorest third of the respondents making under \$1,800 per year, while 20% made over \$5,000.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Jackson and Pollock, Table 5.

<sup>57</sup> Based on an average weekly wage of \$160 x 24 weeks.

<sup>58</sup> Cortes (1974), p. 58



When the primary wage earner is disabled, other family members must attempt to increase their participation in the labor force to make up for the decreased earning power of the disabled wage earner. The "safety net" for families where the (male) head of household is disabled consists of labor by women and children. For families, where it is not the primary wage earner who is disabled, the decrease in income is not quite so catastrophic, but still substantial, since all household members must work to achieve even a poverty level household income.

The primary difference between the disabled farmworkers surveyed by Cortes and the clientele of the vocational rehabilitation programs surveyed by E.H. White and Company is that 42% of the respondents surveyed by Cortes had their income supplemented by an income maintenance or support program, while only 13% of the handicapped MSFW's surveyed by E.H. White and Company received public assistance.<sup>59</sup> Since the Cortes study included totally disabled farmworkers who would not be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services, the greater reliance on public support in the group surveyed by Cortes is not surprising.

##### 5. Recent Changes in the MSFW Labor Force

The farm labor market is not an entirely stable one, and responds to overall changes in the U.S. economy and availability of immigrant labor (either legal or illegal). Martin and Mines found that approximately one-fifth of the farmworkers in their 1983 survey were illegal workers<sup>60</sup> and elsewhere,<sup>61</sup> Martin has argued that illegal immigrants from Mexico and Central America would make up a steadily growing proportion of the MSFW labor force. Deterioration of economic conditions in Mexico and continuing political conflict in Central America have had noticeable impacts at the local level with increases in newly-arrived families, but official data tracking the increases in immigration during 1985-1986 is not available. However, the

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<sup>59</sup> State MIS data- 8 Section 312 project states, 1986.

<sup>60</sup> Martin and Mines (1986), Table I-7, p. 8

<sup>61</sup> Martin, Scientific American, October, 1983.





passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act (Simpson-Rodino Bill) in late 1986 is likely to decrease, if not fully eliminate, the importance of illegal immigrants in the MSFW labor force.

At the same time, MSFW's are settling out of the farm labor force. Many factors affect the rate at which MSFW's leave farmwork, but the availability of alternative sources of employment is the primary one. In areas where there is rapid change in the agricultural economy, due to mechanization or change in cropping or farm management patterns, older workers with limited disabilities are likely to be pushed out of the labor force when they experience a disability. A number of disabled workers interviewed were extremely apprehensive that employers might discover they were handicapped and terminate their job.

#### a. Teenage Workers

Although most children of farmworkers work, the length of time they work in agriculture may have decreased.<sup>62</sup> While 85% of the 14-17 year olds in Martin's 1983 survey worked in farmwork, their average number of weeks of work per year was 8.2 weeks, probably summer work. School attendance and graduation is increasing and migrant education has, to some degree, broken the cycle of occupational segregation faced by farmworker children.

The decreases in amount of childhood work are positive since physically demanding childhood work is implicated in the development of a number of musculoskeletal problems that become disabling later in life.<sup>63</sup>

#### b. Women Workers

Data is available from California, but not from other states, on women's participation in the farm labor force. The major sources of this data are a

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<sup>62</sup> Martin and Mines, Table II-4, p. 18

<sup>63</sup> Wilk (1986), p. 81



1976 study by the California Commission on the Status of Women<sup>64</sup> and the 1983 survey by Martin and Mines. We believe that the results can be generalized to the Mexican-American MSFW labor force in general.

Women's participation in the California MSFW workforce continues strong, although the average weeks worked per year by women was only 16 weeks. Crop tasks are occupationally segregated by sex, with women working much more in tasks such as hand harvesting, hoeing, and sorting; with pruning, thinning, planting, and machine operation performed almost exclusively by men. Where cannery work is available, most workers are women.

These work patterns suggest that women workers are as likely to experience occupationally-caused disabilities as men, but that the type of disability may be different. Women may experience fewer disabilities caused by accidents, but may run similar or greater risks for musculoskeletal problems.

As women grow older, their participation in the non-farm workforce increases. This stems, in part, from women's earning power in farmwork being much less than men's. The incentives to seek alternate employment are therefore stronger. Both men and women workers supplement their income from farmwork with casual labor in non-farmwork. But, after age 35, women make up the bulk of the non-farm workforce.<sup>65</sup> This has important implications for vocational rehabilitation because disabled older women are likely to have more diverse work experience than men.

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<sup>64</sup> Amy Barton, Campesinas: Women Farmworkers in the California Labor Force, California Commission on the Status of Women, 1978

<sup>65</sup> Martin and Mines, p. 16



## 6. Language

The predominant language for Hispanic MSFW's is Spanish. Seventy-three percent of Hispanic MSFW's in the California labor force do not speak English "well" or "at all."<sup>66</sup> Language use is closely related to cultural assimilation, but there is evidence that even U.S.-born Hispanic MSFW's English is limited. Although the proportion of predominantly English-speaking MSFW's increases among children and youth, 36% of the most assimilated group, young U.S. born dependents, still are limited in English.<sup>67</sup>

Language patterns among handicapped MSFW's interviewed in the E.H. White and Company 1986 survey of Hispanic farmworkers in Illinois, Texas, and California are remarkably similar to the California census statistics on English usage. Seventy percent spoke no English, while about 30% of the Hispanic MSFW respondents spoke some English; although only 10% preferred English to Spanish. Table III-2 gives an overview of bilingual MSFW language use in different social contexts.

MSFW's whose primary language is Spanish speak some English with family and friends because they are in the process of assimilation. In Table III-2, this is more apparent among Spanish-speaking teenagers who are largely bilingual. Consequently, although Spanish predominates as the language of handicapped Hispanic MSFW's, young dependents who may be eligible for vocational rehabilitation service have less linguistic handicaps than older MSFW's.

Even farmworkers who may occasionally speak English with family or co-workers are very limited in their reading and writing ability in English. Only 22% of the handicapped Hispanic farmworkers surveyed by E.H. White and Co. read newspapers, magazine, or books in English often. But, as in the case with spoken English, age makes a great difference. While 56% of the teenagers

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<sup>66</sup> Table Set 3 (California), "Citizenship and Ability to Speak English", Agricultural Data Tape, p. 57. This database is built from the 5% sample of the 1980 Census.

<sup>67</sup> op.cit., p.68





read material in English often, only 6% of the older farmworkers over 50 years of age read in English often. Functional illiteracy in English, consequently, is a barrier to both vocational training and employment for at least 80% of the Spanish-speaking MSFW's.

Other linguistic groups are represented in the migrant and seasonal farmworker population. Haitian MSFW's in the Eastern migrant stream are predominantly Creole-speaking. We have no information on their English-speaking ability, but it is likely to be extremely limited.

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TABLE III-2  
PERCENT OF YOUTH AND OLDER MSFWs, AND ALL SPANISH-SPEAKING MSFWs,  
WHO USE ENGLISH IN DIFFERENT SOCIAL CONTEXTS

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CONTEXT*	Youth (19 or less)	Older MSFW's (50 or more)	All Spanish- Speaking MSFWs
With friends	63%	17%	33%
With family	44%	23%	33%
With co-workers	50%	21%	27%
With storekeepers	44%	20%	20%
With employer	56%	10%	25%

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\* Respondents answered separately for each context.

Source: E.H. White and Company Survey, 1986. Crosstabulation of Q. 61 "With whom do you speak English?" by age. Asked only of respondents who preferred Spanish as the language for being interviewed. (N=166)

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## SECTION IV: NATIONAL PATTERNS OF SERVICE DELIVERY

### A. INTRODUCTION

This section describes Section 312 projects' provision of VR services to handicapped MSFW's. Information stems from State VR agencies' MIS data program-wide and from interviews with MSFW's who received services from Section 312 projects in four states: California, Florida, Illinois, and Texas.

MIS data and interviews with handicapped MSFW's included information both on clients formally accepted for VR service and those whose cases were closed prior to being accepted for service (status 08 closures).<sup>68</sup> MIS data and clients interviewed also include cases closed either as successfully rehabilitated (status 26) or as unsuccessful (status 28 or 30) during the year prior to the study.

Issues addressed are: level of annual service to handicapped MSFW's, differences between the Section 312 caseload and the general population served by RSA, geographical variations in levels of service, and program outcomes. Then, in the following Section V, we examine specific aspects of VR service to MSFW's: outreach, diagnostic services, vocational assessment, plan development, restoration services, vocational training, placement, and post-placement services.

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<sup>68</sup> Cases closed prior to acceptance for VR services (status 08) are included since this group usually received some form of intervention (e.g. diagnostic services, referral, counseling), even if the intervention was not, a "service" in RSA's technical nomenclature. It is important to note that, although this group includes MSFW's who were determined to be ineligible to receive VR services, the "ineligibles" (those determined not to be disabled or disabled but not vocationally handicapped) only made up 13% of the cases closed prior to VR acceptance.



## B. LEVELS OF SERVICE

FINDING IV-1: The Section 312 program is currently serving approximately 2,500 handicapped MSFW's annually, 500 of whom are successfully rehabilitated, giving the program a rehabilitation rate of 67%, a figure somewhat higher than the RSA national average.<sup>69</sup>

RECOMMENDATION IV-1: RSA should continue to support direct services to handicapped MSFW's based on the demonstrated levels of service achieved by the Section 312 program.

Table IV-1 provides an overview of the status of closed cases recorded in state MIS records.<sup>70</sup> Table IV-2 provides a snapshot of the numbers and status of clients participating in the Section 312 projects at the time of the sampling dates. This provides a view of the "mix" of the caseload at a point in time, but does not necessarily show the distribution of services received since clients will be in certain statuses (e.g. training) longer than in others (e.g. plan development).

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<sup>69</sup> The Section 312 rehabilitation rate is calculated as percent of cases accepted for VR service which are closed rehabilitated, i.e. 513/765 or 67%. The RSA Annual Report for 1984 shows an overall rehabilitation rate of 63%.

<sup>70</sup> Figures are based on state MIS figures for the 11 funded projects. Each state sample consists of MIS data covering a year in the FY 85-86 period of the evaluation but since the sample period did not in all cases correspond to the federal fiscal year, figures may not agree with RSA-300 reports submitted by states. The sample consisted of all cases which had been closed during the year and all cases which were open at the time of the MIS request. In addition, figures were adjusted to account for an 18 month reporting period for Utah and missing data on open cases in Virginia was estimated. California and Texas figures are weighted to bring the random samples of 200 cases up to the known total levels of performance for the sample year. Figures, therefore, represent approximations which, however are likely to be within 5% of actual levels of service for FY '86. Cross-tabulations of MIS data do not include data for Washington, Utah and Virginia which were provided in formats that did not correspond to the E.H. White and Company crosstabulations. In cases where these states are not included, MIS data is noted as being available for only the 8 projects.





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TABLE IV-1  
STATUS OF CLOSED CASES -- PROGRAM-WIDE

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<u>STATUS</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>PERCENT</u>
<b>TOTAL CLOSED</b>	<b>1,466</b>	<b>100%</b>
Not Accepted for Service (Status 08)	701	48%
Accepted for Service	765	52%
Closed Rehabilitated (Status 26)	513	35%
Closed Not-Rehabilitated (Status 28 and 30)	252	17%

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Source: State MIS data, 11 projects, 1986

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TABLE IV-2  
STATUS OF OPEN CASES -- PROGRAM-WIDE

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<u>STATUS</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>PERCENT</u>
TOTAL OPEN	1,101	100%
Applicant and Extended Evaluation (Status 02 and 06)	302	27%
Total In Plan (Status 10-24)	804	73%
Plan Development (Status 10 and 12)	77	7%
Receiving Services: Counseling, Restoration, Training (Status 14-18)	492	45%
Ready for Work, Status Interrupted (Status 20 and Status 24)	154	14%
Employed (Status 22)	77	7%

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Source: State MIS data, 11 Projects, 1986.

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FINDING IV-2: Section 312 projects successfully rehabilitated clients whose low educational levels and limited English language ability constitute serious disadvantages in competition for employment in comparison to the national RSA caseload.

RECOMMENDATION IV-2: RSA program development efforts should concentrate on incentives to state VR agencies to serve the most disadvantaged among the MSFW population, with the goal of building on existing capabilities.

Table IV-3 provides a profile of rehabilitated clients served by the Section 312 projects in comparison to rehabilitated clients nationally.

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TABLE IV-3  
PROFILE OF REHABILITATED MSFW CLIENTS AND NATIONAL CASELOAD

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<u>CHARACTERISTIC</u>	<u>SECTION 312 PROJECTS</u>	<u>NATIONAL CASELOAD</u>
Mean Education	7.7 years	11.3 years
Limited English	38%	not available
Age	39.6 years	32.6 years
Monthly Family Income	\$193	\$408
Hispanic	51.7%	6.2%
Black	9.0%	18.2%
White	38.6%	79.9%
American Indian	0.7%	0.6%
Males	67%	57%
Females	33%	43%

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Sources: Section State MIS data, 8 projects, 1986. National rehabilitation data is from the RSA 1984 Annual Report.

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Table IV-3 shows that the Section 312 projects serve a population that is demographically similar in composition to the MSFW population nationally, a population which faces serious barriers to employment when physical disabilities preclude continuing work in agriculture.

The most striking demographic variance is an underrepresentation of Blacks in the MSFW caseload because only three Section 312 projects are funded which serve areas of the Eastern Migrant stream. In addition, two of these projects (Virginia and New York) have a lower representation of handicapped Black MSFW's than would be expected from the ethnic composition of MSFW communities in the areas they serve.<sup>71</sup>

The Section 312 caseload also includes less women than the national one. Only 32% of the clients were women; however, those women who were served were as likely as men to be rehabilitated. The predominance of men in the caseload may also reflect somewhat elevated risk of occupationally-related disabilities and lower demand from women for rehabilitation services, although women are active labor force participants.

Migrants, 78% of whom were Spanish-speaking, made up 42% of the caseload in survey states.<sup>72</sup> The migrants served by Section 312 programs in California, Illinois, Texas, and Illinois worked in 17 "upstream" states in the Midwest, Pacific Northwest, and Eastern Seaboard.

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<sup>71</sup> The New York MSFW caseload only includes 16% Blacks, although the best estimates of the ethnic composition of the MSFW population at large is that 70% is black. The Virginia project serves 57% Blacks, slightly less than the estimated ratio in the MSFW population. Although the Florida project serves 80% Blacks, the very low level of VR services for MSFW's in Florida, a major farmworker state with a predominantly Black MSFW population, accounts for a good portion of the underrepresentation at the national level.

<sup>72</sup> E.H. White and Company Survey, 1986. Data on migrants is only available for the 4 survey states because Section 312 project MIS data does not distinguish between migrant and seasonal farmworkers.



Migrants' primary work was field work in row crops with 72% working in this type of work, 16% working in nuts or fruits and 11% working in canneries. Just over 35% worked in more than one location other than the location where they were interviewed; another 25% worked in a second location.

Migrants were as likely as other clients to be accepted for service and were slightly more likely to be rehabilitated than seasonal farmworkers. Only 13% reported that having to migrate interfered with their receiving VR services.

**FINDING IV-3:** Section 312 projects provide good levels of service to farmworkers in the communities where they operate; however, there is not yet a truly national service system for delivery of VR services to MSFW's. RSA funding strategy has been to use the limited Section 312 funds available to support projects in the states with the most concentrated farmworker populations. The states which are funded include approximately 60% of the national MSFW population, but coverage of MSFW areas within those states is not nearly complete, with the exception of Idaho and Texas.

**RECOMMENDATION IV-3:** State VR agencies and RSA should reexamine the funding level for services to migrant and seasonal farmworkers to ensure there is equitable access to VR services by MSFW's, irrespective of the geographical location of their residence.

MSFW's are not distributed evenly throughout the U.S; Table IV-4 provides an overview of the MSFW population in both those states where RSA has funded Section 312 projects and those states with large farmworker populations where there is no special project support for services to MSFW's. The four states with the largest MSFW populations (California, Florida, Texas, and Washington) are funded, but given a national funding level of approximately \$1 million per year and a funding level of around \$70-\$100,000 per state project, it has only been possible to fund six of the nineteen next largest states.



TABLE IV-4A  
PEAK MSFW POPULATIONS IN MAJOR AGRICULTURAL STATES<sup>73</sup>  
STATES WITH PROJECTS FUNDED BY RSA (1985-1986)

STATE	PEAK MSFW POP.	# OF VOC. HANDICAPPED
California	425,000	74,200
Colorado	30,000	5,250
Florida	110,000	19,250
Idaho	32,000	5,600
Illinois	40,000	7,000
New York	32,000	5,600
Texas	330,000	57,750
Utah	10,000	1,750
Virginia	21,000	3,675
Washington	75,000	13,125
SUBTOTAL	1,105,000	193,375

As can be seen from Table IV-4A, the eleven state projects funded by RSA under the Section 312 program include most of the major MSFW states in the nation. But an equal number of states, with an aggregate total of about half a million MSFW's are left out of the service delivery network. Because many of the states which are not funded include migrant workers homebased in Texas, Florida, and California, it is possible that increased levels of service in these homebase states might provide easier access to VR services for these migrants than using limited resources for "upstream" service.

<sup>73</sup> Source: E.H. White and Company calculations based on various estimates by Migrant Health (Migrant and Seasonal Impact Areas, HHS, 1985; Methodology for Designating Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Areas, HHS, 1985), USDA 1980 quarterly surveys (reported in Phillip Martin, "Farm Labor Data and JTPA 402 Allocations"), and 1977 Social Security data on MSFW's (Chris Paige, "Comparison of 1977 Social Security Data and 1980 Census Data"). Because of the variations in data sources estimated error is + or - 20% for population at the state level. Methodological issues relevant to population estimates are discussed in detail in Appendix A.





It is also important to note that Section 312 projects do not provide statewide coverage in even the states which are funded. Maps IV-1 through 11 show the MSFW areas served by Section 312 projects and estimated populations of handicapped MSFW's in the local service areas. As is the case with RSA funding allocations at the national level, state agencies have usually done a good job of targeting service to agricultural areas with the highest density of MSFW's.

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TABLE IV-4B  
PEAK MSFW POPULATIONS IN MAJOR AGRICULTURAL STATES  
STATES NOT CURRENTLY FUNDED BY RSA (1985-1986)

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<u>STATE</u>	<u>PEAK MSFW POP.</u> <sup>74</sup>	<u># OF VOC. HANDICAPPED</u> <sup>75</sup>
Arizona	40,000	7,000
Delaware	20,000	3,500
Georgia	25,000	4,375
Indiana	25,000	4,375
Michigan	65,000	11,375
Mississippi <sup>76</sup>	28,000	4,900
Minnesota	30,000	5,250
New Jersey	30,000	5,250
North Carolina	60,000	10,500
Ohio	35,000	6,125
Oregon	60,000	10,500
Pennsylvania	20,000	3,500
Wisconsin	30,000	5,250
<hr/>		
SUBTOTAL	468,000	81,900

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<sup>74</sup> Totals do not agree with the national total of vocationally handicapped because of duplicated counts of migrant farmworkers who are included in the state counts of both upstream and downstream populations.

<sup>75</sup> Estimates only include labor force participants 16-64, estimated as 60% of total population, the primary target population for VR services.

<sup>76</sup> Mississippi was funded for FY '87.



# CALIFORNIA

## LEGEND

--- Agricultural Areas

▨ Areas Served by Federal Project

COUNTIES: 1=SANTA CRUZ

2=SANTA CLARA

3=SAN BENITO

4=MONTEREY

( # ) E.H. White & Co. estimates  
of handicapped MSFW's in  
project areas

●--- Field Office

San Jose

1,000

Salinas

7,200

MADERA

FRESNO

Fresno

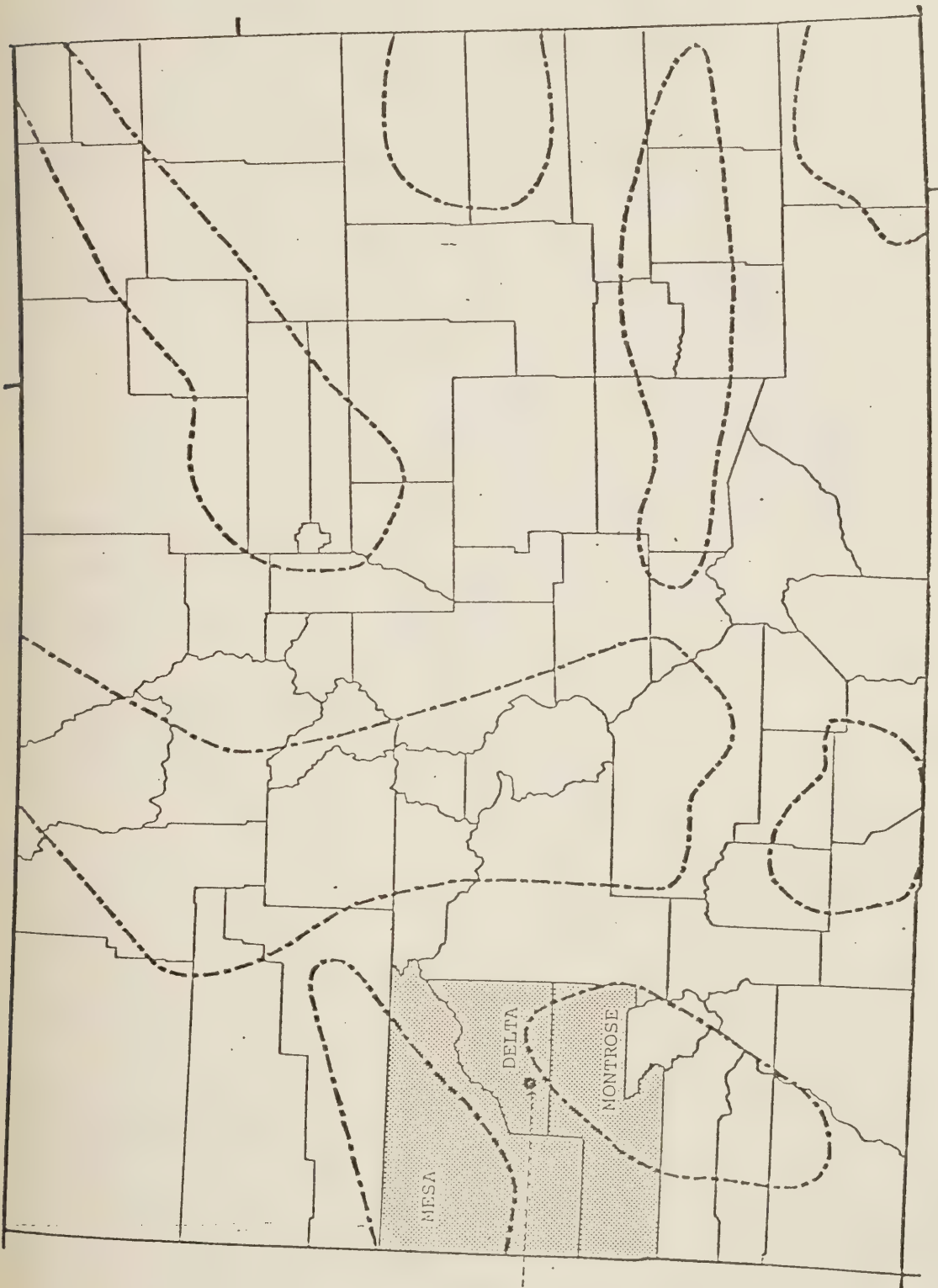
18,000

IMPERIAL

El Centro

2,750





Delta  
1,000

## LEGEND

--- Agricultural Areas

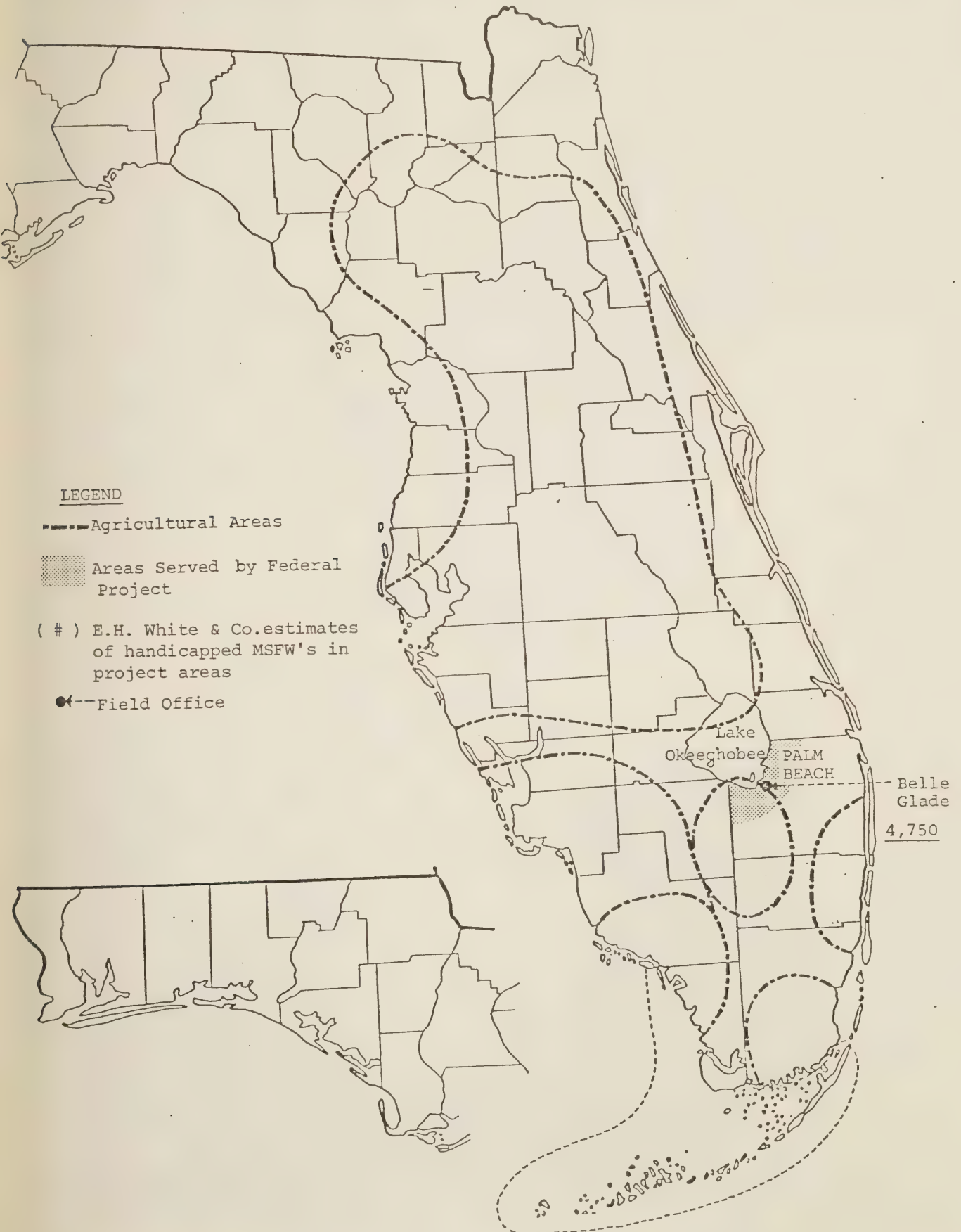
Areas Served by Federal Project

( # ) E.H. White & Co. estimates of handicapped MSFW's in project areas

● --- Field Office









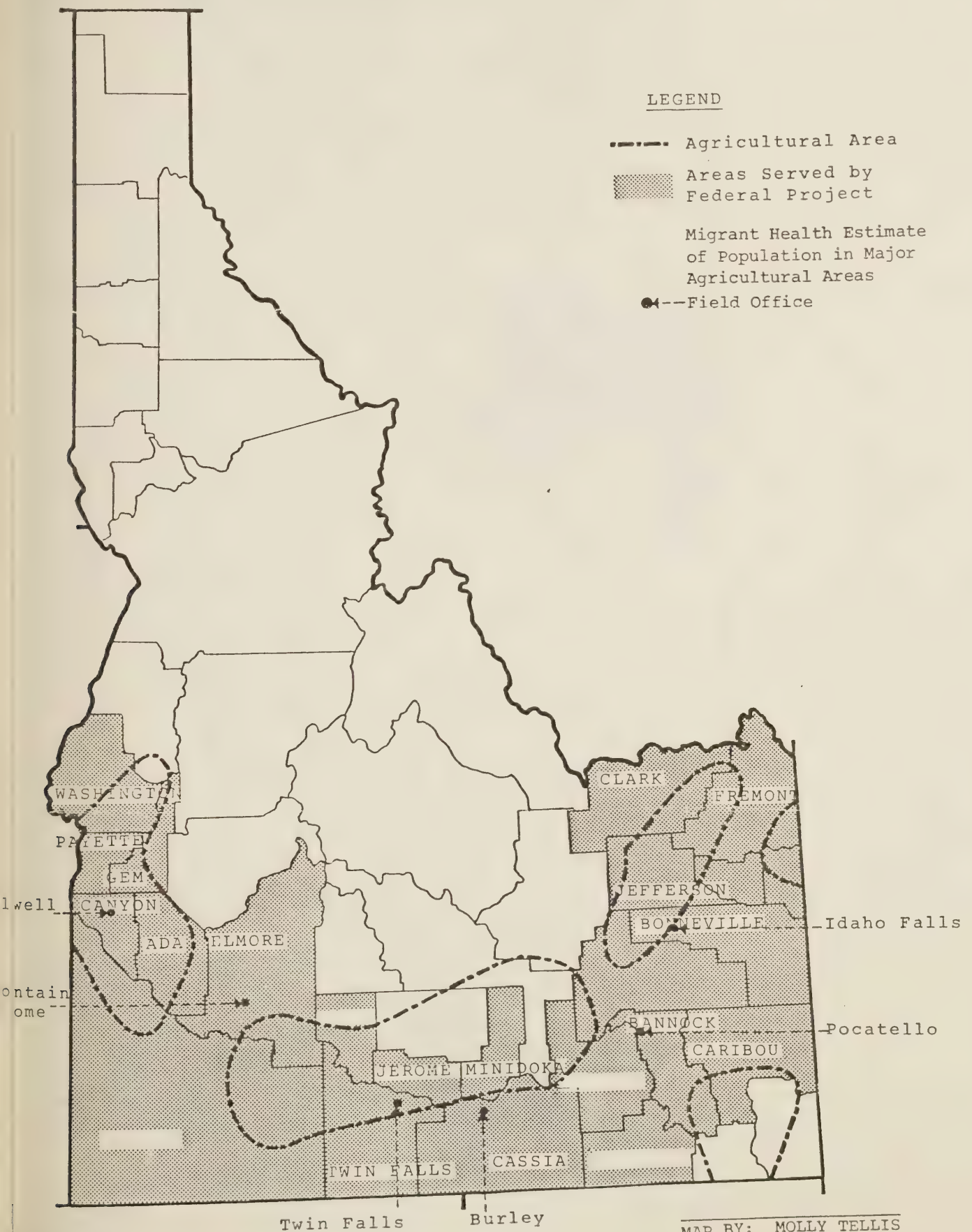
## LEGEND

--- Agricultural Area

▨ Areas Served by  
Federal Project

Migrant Health Estimate  
of Population in Major  
Agricultural Areas

●---Field Office

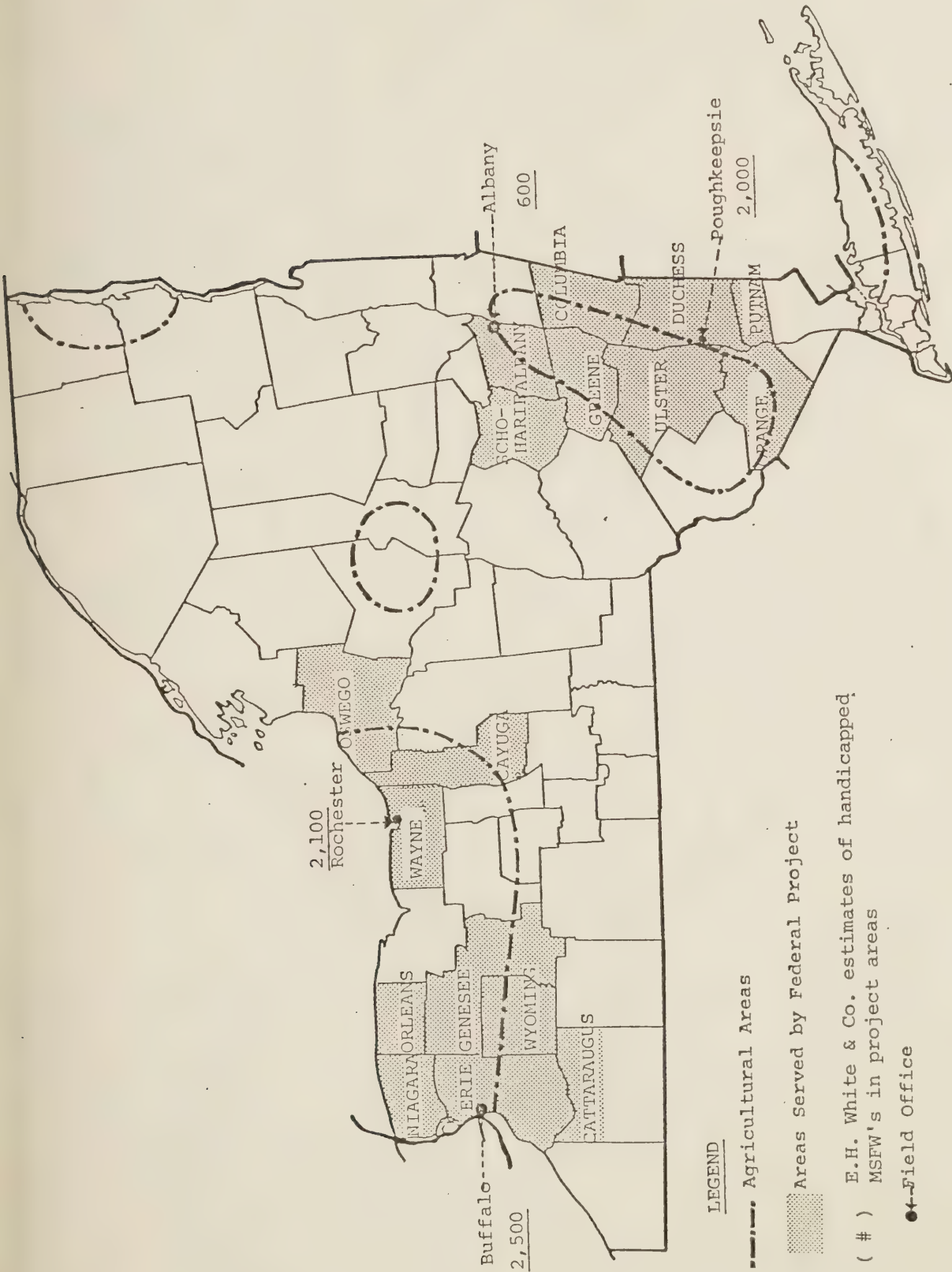














# TEXAS

## PANHANDLE REGION

## LEGEND

1. OLDHAM 11,900
2. POTTER
3. DEAF SMITH
4. RANDALL
5. PARMER
6. CASTRO
7. SWISHER
8. BRISCOE

----- Agricultural Areas

▨ Areas Served by Federal Project

( # ) E.H. White & Co. estimate of handicapped MSFW's in project areas

● Field Office

----- Amarillo

----- Plainview

9. BAILEY

10. LAMB

11. HALE 12. FLOYD 13. HOCKLEY

14. LUBBOCK

Uvalde

Eagle Pass

Laredo

Edinburg

McAllen

Harlingen

Brownsville

## WINTERGARDEN REGION

15. VAL VERDE
16. KINNEY 12,000
17. MAVERICK
18. ZAVALA
19. DIMMIT
20. LA SALLE
21. WEBB
22. ZAPATE

## 30,000 LOWER RIO GRANDE REGION

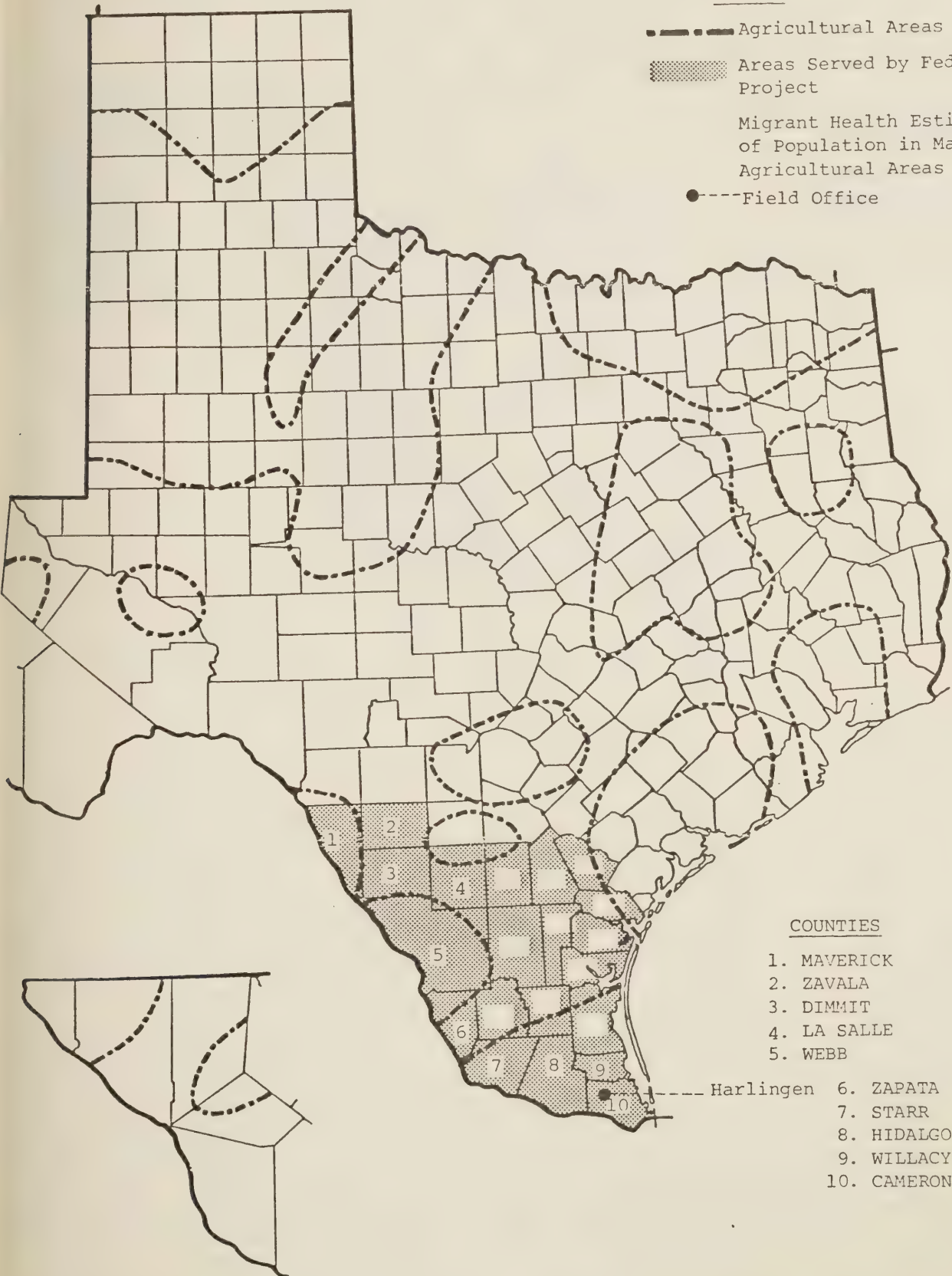
23. STARR
24. HIDALGO
25. CAMERON
26. WILLACY



# TEXAS COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND

## LEGEND

- Agricultural Areas
- ▨ Areas Served by Federal Project
- Migrant Health Estimate of Population in Major Agricultural Areas
- Field Office



## COUNTIES

- |             |             |
|-------------|-------------|
| 1. MAVERICK | 6. ZAPATA   |
| 2. ZAVALA   | 7. STARR    |
| 3. DIMMIT   | 8. HIDALGO  |
| 4. LA SALLE | 9. WILLACY  |
| 5. WEBB     | 10. CAMERON |

Harlingen





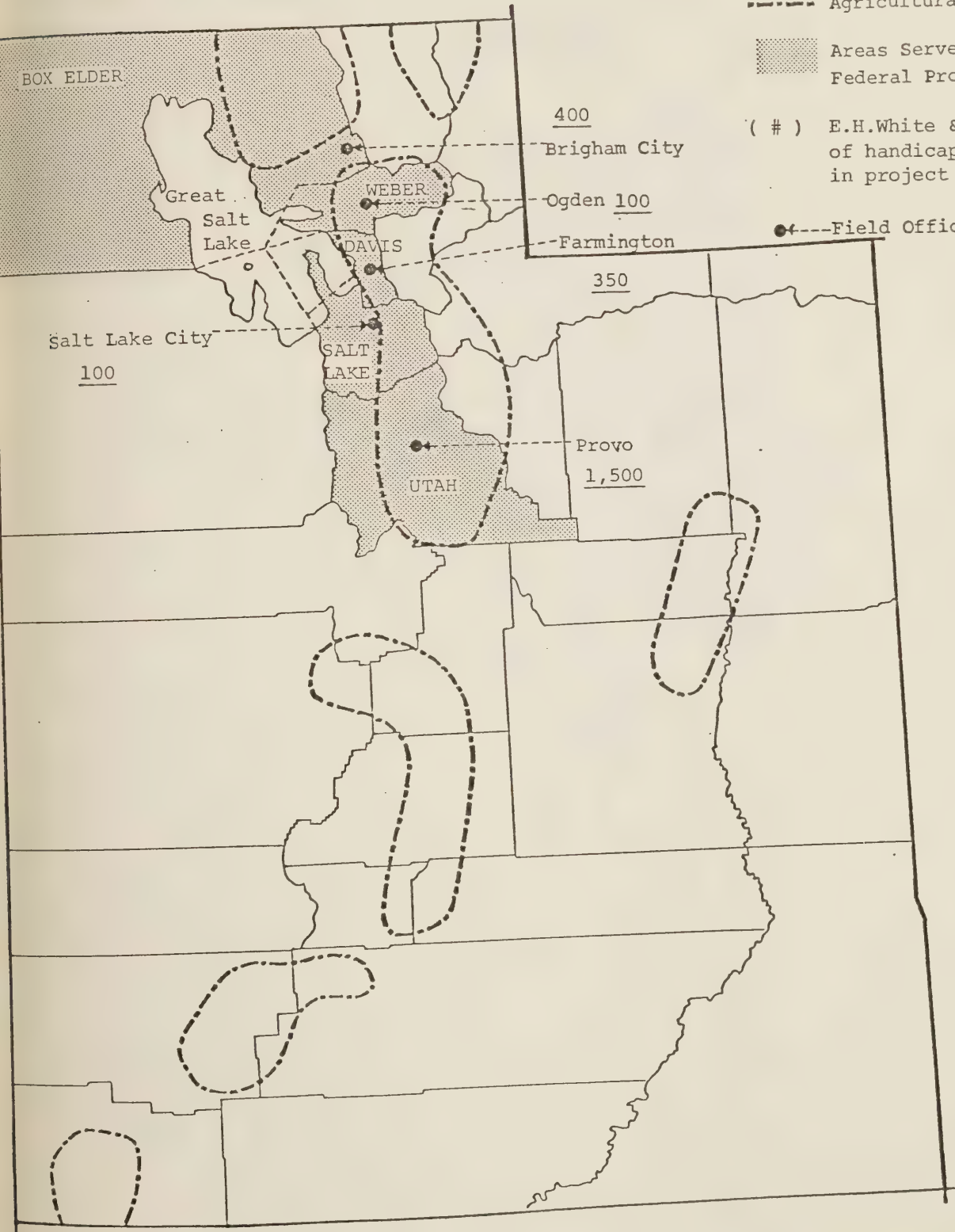
## LEGEND

----- Agricultural Areas

▨ Areas Served by  
Federal Project

( # ) E.H.White & Co.estimate  
of handicapped MSFW's  
in project areas

●-----Field Office





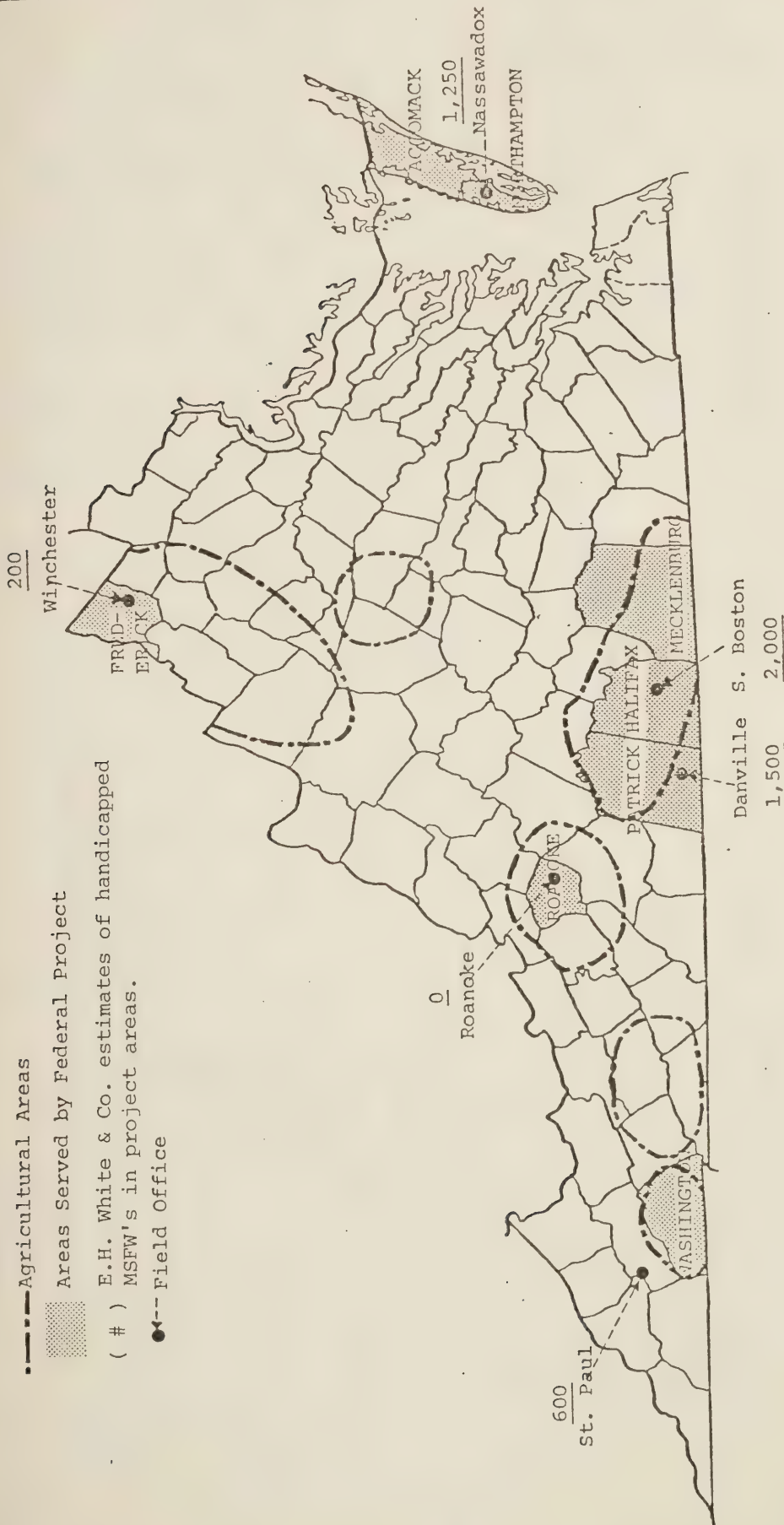
## LEGEND

--- Agricultural Areas

▨ Areas Served by Federal Project

( # ) E.H. White & Co. estimates of handicapped MSFW's in project areas.

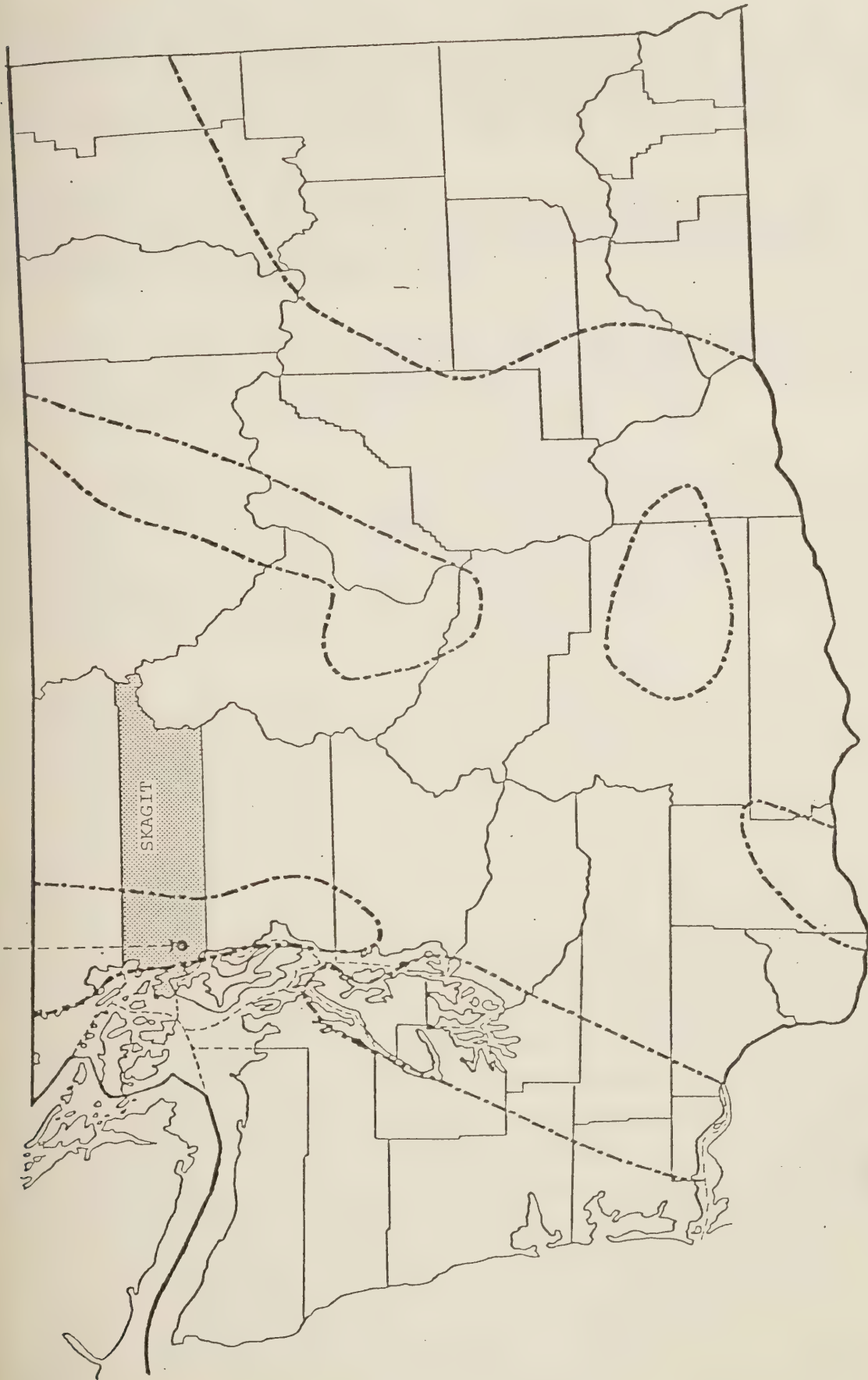
● Field Office





1,750

Mt. Vernon



## LEGEND

--- Agricultural Areas

▨ Areas Served by Federal Project

( # ) E.H. White & Co. estimates of handicapped MSFW's in project areas

●--Field Office





**FINDING IV-4:** MSFW's experience a characteristic pattern of disabilities which reflect the occupational and environmental risk factors they are exposed to. Section 312 project caseloads reflect these patterns , showing elevated levels of visually and orthopedic/functionally handicapped clients. However, the representation of psychological disabilities is lower than would be expected from known health risks.

**RECOMMENDATION IV-4:** RSA should investigate the possibility of interagency coordination at the federal level to improve referral, diagnosis, and community mental health treatment facilities to allow improved capabilities to serve psychologically handicapped MSFW's.

Table IV-5 presents an overview of the disabilities of rehabilitated MSFW's in comparison to overall patterns among handicapped persons rehabilitated in RSA programs nationally.

The disabilities of the Section 312 project caseloads are relatively consistent with the overall patterns of farmworker disability. The high proportion of visual disabilities is consistent with Cortes survey of the general farmworker population which showed 7% of MSFW's to be blind, while another 56% experienced some visual disability.

The level of orthopedic/functional disabilities is higher in the farmworker caseload than in the national incidence, but lower than would be expected from the known risk factors likely to handicap farmworkers. Cortes' study found 44% of handicapped MSFW's to have orthopedic/functional disabilities. This difference might stem either from the definitional differences between the Cortes' study's definition of disability and VR determinations of vocational handicap. It is likely that a portion of the functionally handicapped MSFW's, particularly those with back problems, continue to work, but in less physically demanding jobs, despite experiencing a genuine vocational handicap. The underrepresentation of psychological disabilities is most probably because of the lack of community mental health networks to refer MSFW's for VR services (although MSFW's may be less inclined to seek help for psychological problems than other populations, relying instead on family networks or churches). In addition, the MSFW population may continue to work despite psychological disability, since the agricultural workplace may allow for higher degrees of dysfunction than in other



occupational areas. In particular, job mobility among farmworkers is high and even seriously dysfunctional workers may simply leave one job for another job.<sup>77</sup>

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TABLE IV-5  
COMPARISON OF MSEW DISABILITY AND NATIONAL CASELOAD

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<u>TYPE DISABILITY</u>	<u>MSEW CASELOAD</u>	<u>MSEW REHABILITATIONS</u>	<u>NATIONAL REHABILITATIONS</u> <sup>78</sup>
VISUAL	11.9%	21.4%	8.1%
AUDITORY	2.0%	2.2%	7.4%
ORTHOPEDIC	32.4%	29.6%	22.8%
AMPUTATION	1.2%	1.7%	2.6%
PSYCHOLOGICAL	24.3%	17.5%	39.1%
OTHER	27.2%	27.6%	20.2%
NO DISABILITY	1.0%	0	0

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Source: State MIS data, 11 projects, 1986; RSA figures from 1984 Annual Report.

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<sup>77</sup> It might be argued that psychological disabilities which allow continued employment do not constitute a vocational handicap; however, as in the case of other disabilities experienced by MSEW's, vocational handicaps are characterized by loss of productivity and increasing difficulty in competing for occasional work, rather than total inability to secure work.

<sup>78</sup> RSA regularly publishes data on characteristics of rehabilitated clients. Comparisons with cases closed in status 08 (pre-acceptance) show that the national caseload is (both rehabilitated and not accepted) is slightly different than the rehabilitated caseload. Representation of disabilities among 08 closures is as follows: 7.4% Visual, 3.5% Auditory, 25.6% Orthopedic, 34.6% Psychological, 29% other. Table T014, Series A3, RSA.



Several specific conditions are emphasized by project staff as being characteristic of MSFW disabilities. Table IV-6 presents additional information on the incidence of selected disabilities in the Section 312 program in comparison to national patterns.

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TABLE IV-6  
SELECTED MSFW DISABILITIES IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE

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	<u>MSFW CASELOAD</u>	<u>NATIONAL REHABILITATIONS</u>
<b>Orthopedic</b>	<b>32.4</b>	<b>45.5</b>
Accidents	24.1	11.5
Spinal Cord	1.5	7.8
Congenital	.7	8.8
Polio	.9	3.8
Other	5.2	13.6
<b>Psychological</b>	<b>24.3</b>	<b>39.1</b>
Alcoholism	4.9	6.2
Drug addiction	4.9	1.5
Mental Illness	7.9	18.8
MR	6.6	12.5
<b>Other</b>	<b>13.9</b>	<b>10.0</b>
Diabetes	.6	1.5
Epilepsy	1.7	2.1
Heart Disease	1.4	2.3
Hernia	2.7	0.8
Other digestive	2.7	1.1
Genitourinary	4.8	2.2

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Source: State MIS data, 8 projects; RSA 1983 Annual Report

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As can be seen from Table IV-6 , the most striking difference between MSFW patterns of disability and the general RSA caseload is the large proportion of orthopedic/functional impairments caused by accidents. While MSFW's experience a higher rate of accident-caused orthopedic/functional impairments, there is a lower than usual incidence of spinal cord disabilities and congenital or early onset disabilities (e.g. polio) because many of these severely disabled persons are not able to become part of the MSFW workforce. The pattern also includes few of the severely disabling orthopedic conditions





resulting from nervous system disorders (e.g. multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy), probably because the MSFW population consist predominantly of workers, with a lower representation of family members.

The elevated rates of hernias and genitourinary disabilities is consistent with the patterns of disease caused by working conditions (hernias) and multi-parity among MSFW women (prolapsed uteruses).<sup>79</sup>

The surprising finding is that several conditions considered by Section 312 project counseling staff to be elevated among farmworkers (e.g. alcoholism, diabetes) are underrepresented in the MSFW vocational rehabilitation caseload. The low incidence of diabetes is best explained by the fact that diabetes may go unrecognized for a long period of time; also among the visual disorders which are coded as major disabilities, there is a high proportion of diabetic retinopathy.

Although overall patterns of handicapping conditions are as expected, it is important to note, however, that patterns of disability vary greatly from state to state because states have developed specialized referral networks in which certain types of disabilities predominate. These state-by-state variations in patterns of disability suggest that there is still room for improvement in projects' efforts to provide equitable access to all MSFW's. These variations are discussed in the state case studies in Volume 2.

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<sup>79</sup> Interview with Dr. Marion Moses, expert on MSFW occupational health, March, 1987.



FINDING IV-5: MSFW's are strongly attached to the labor force. Half of the MSFW's interviewed continued to work after they became disabled despite their handicap. The issue for these MSFW's is not so much access to some sort of work but to appropriate employment. The major impact of VR services for these "working disabled" MSFW's is increased job stability, job satisfaction, and earning power. Standard measures of VR success (status 26 closures) do not adequately describe the impact of services provided to MSFW's.

RECOMMENDATION IV-5: RSA should use alternative measures of successful intervention such as a "weighted closure" matrix in monitoring Section 312 project performance in order to provide state VR agencies with incentives to effect long-term impact on handicapped MSFW's work life. Such alternative measures should include other measures of job stability (e.g employment in non-seasonal industries) or client satisfaction.

Table IV-7 presents an overview of the labor force status of MSFW's at the time they became disabled. While most of the MSFW's were in the labor force at the time of their disability, 13% were not working at the time of becoming disabled, either because they were too young (9.5% were congenitally handicapped) or were not in the labor force at that point. Of those who were working at the time of their disability, 49% were unable to continue working after becoming disabled. But the other 51% continued to work, most of them in the same type of job that they performed before becoming disabled.

Because of the intermittent nature of farmwork, it is difficult to determine the exact impact of disability on the earnings of the handicapped MSFW's who were able to continue working. However, 95% of the clients made less than \$150 per week at referral and the average weekly family income at referral was \$193.<sup>80</sup> Many of the handicapped MSFW's who continued to work after becoming disabled were still working part-time at the time of referral. Interviewers reported that an important reason given by clients for seeking VR services was that they could not continue working ("ya no podian aguantar"). But, at the same time, 13% of those surveyed had considered at least one reason to not become involved in rehabilitation.<sup>81</sup> The main reasons given were that the process "took too long" or that a family "couldn't afford" to take the time to get involved.

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<sup>80</sup> State MIS Data, 8 States

<sup>81</sup> Question 8-9 "Did it seem to you there any reasons you might not want to get involved in the rehabilitation program?...What were those reasons?", E.H. White and Company Survey, 1986.



TABLE IV-7  
LABOR FORCE STATUS OF HANDICAPPED MSFW'S -- SURVEY STATES

	<u>CALIFORNIA</u>		<u>ILLINOIS</u>		<u>TEXAS</u>		<u>FLORIDA</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
TOTAL MSFW'S	59	100%	82	100%	77	100%	36	100%	254	100%
A) NOT WORKING WHEN DISABLED	3	5%	12	15%	12	16%	15	42%	42	16%
B) WORKING WHEN DISABLED	56	95%	70	85%	65	84%	21	58%	212	84%
NUMBER/PERCENT OF THOSE WORKING AT DISABILITY WHO:										
A) KEPT WORKING	21	37%	41	59%	36	55%	6	29%	104	49%
B) STAYED AT SAME JOB	12	21%	40	57%	30	46%	5	24%	87	41%

Source: E.H. White and Company survey data, 1986, Q. 36, 40, 42

From the perspective of the handicapped MSFW's who were still working, the availability of VR services was only one of several options. Many were likely not to apply for services unless it seemed clear to them that they would receive a direct benefit. Otherwise, working, even in pain, at a slow pace, or performing menial labor, was preferable to running the risk of wasting time because time is a precious commodity for a farmworker with dependents who has no safety net, for whom time in the fields is survival itself.





### C. THE NATURE OF THE PROGRAM IMPACT

The average earnings at closure for rehabilitated MSFW's is \$177 per week or \$4.42 per hour. The average earnings at referral for the rehabilitated MSFW's is \$80 per week.<sup>82</sup> This suggests a dramatic improvement in earning power for rehabilitated MSFW's. However, previous studies of the validity of MIS data within the VR system (Berkeley Planning Associates, 1978) cast doubt on the reliability of MIS data on earnings at referral. It is likely that MIS data on earnings at closure is accurate, although it is not clear that earnings at closure is a valid measure of long-term earning potential.<sup>83</sup>

The question of the most valid measure of MSFW earning potential is a very complex one because job instability and seasonality of employment are more important determinants of an individual's annual earning potential than are differences in wage rates among jobs at the low paying end of the occupational spectrum.

Although earnings in the week prior to referral may not be a valid measure of pre-program earning potential, the mean income of \$80 per week at referral is consistent with what we know of MSFW's earnings after becoming disabled, namely that about half continue working part-time in minimum or sub-minimum wage jobs, and that another half do not work. Similarly, the earnings at closure for rehabilitated farmworkers is consistent with prevailing wages in the farm labor and other nonagricultural occupations where MSFW's work, suggesting that the rehabilitated clients have regained their earning potential. The MIS data on pre-program and post-program earnings for clients is, therefore, quite plausible. However, we do not know the exact degree to which VR services increased the stability of employment for the rehabilitated MSFW's who returned to farmwork since MIS data does not include post-program annualized earnings.

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<sup>82</sup> State MIS Data, 8 States

<sup>83</sup> Average earnings are derived from the RSA-300 which groups earnings into ranges. Therefore mean earnings were calculated by assigning to each wage group coded, e.g., \$150 - \$199.99, the midpoint.



As part of this evaluation's focus on client opinion we requested clients' opinions of services. It is useful to compare the benefits of VR services, as perceived both by MSFW's who were not accepted for service, the "unsuccessful closures", with the opinions of rehabilitated MSFW's. Table IV-8 presents an overview of clients' reports of the most valuable benefits the VR projects provided them.

Table IV-8 presents only data on closed cases, so as to focus on clients' retrospective look at their experience in receiving vocational rehabilitation services.

TABLE IV-8  
PERCEIVED BENEFITS BY STATUS FOR CLOSED CASES -- SURVEY STATES

PERCEIVED BENEFITS	NOT ACCEPTED (STATUS 08)		UNSUCCESSFUL (STATUS 28,30)		REHABILITATED (STATUS 26)	
<b>TOTAL (N=123)</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>
Good Counseling	8	13%	4	26%	12	25%
Medical Services	20	33%	9	60%	32	66%
More employable	1	2%	--	--	6	13%
Self-knowledge (assessment)	--	--	--	--	5	11%
Referral for Service	2	3%	3	20%	2	4%
Other	4	7%	2	13%	5	11%

Source: E.H. White and Company Survey, 1986, Question 30 "What are the most valuable benefits you think you have gotten out of the program?" (Multiple answers possible)

As can be seen from the above Table IV-8, clients' perceptions of program benefits do not fit neatly into the categories which would be expected if status 26 closures reflected the only benefit of VR services or if status 08 closures indicated that no benefits had been received.



The most striking finding is that the MSFW's closed prior to acceptance found "medical services" valuable; in large measure, this refers to the diagnostic services which were provided in the course of determining whether to accept an applicant for service. It is also noteworthy that both "successful" and "unsuccessful" clients found counseling services valuable. Even more surprising is the finding that rehabilitated clients considered it beneficial to find out more about themselves in the vocational evaluation/plan development process.

The MSFW's interviewed agreed, in large measure, with the counseling staff in the Section 312 projects who saw the long-term benefits of the counseling interaction as being one of the most important aspects of their work.

To the degree that the standard measures of performance provide a set of management incentives to VR counselors which do not meaningfully capture the impact of the program intervention, there is the possibility that the existing incentives of status 26 closures may be dysfunctional, since they only measure very short-term impact at a single point in time. Therefore, it is recommended that particular attention be given to the question of quality rehabilitations (placements into stable, appropriate employment). The Section 312 projects have achieved some success in achieving these objectives. Further development should be encouraged. Evaluation of program success by use of such outcome measures is, despite its operational difficulties, perhaps, more relevant than the traditional one. The unique situation facing farmworkers is that "assistance in becoming employed" is not nearly as important as becoming permanently or stably employed.





**FINDING IV-6:** Most clients were satisfied with the program services they had received from Section 312 projects, but there was substantial variation in client satisfaction with the different state projects.

**RECOMMENDATION IV-6:** Section 312 projects should include measures of client satisfaction in monitoring and "fine-tuning" service to MSFW's.

User or "consumer" satisfaction is an important element in the assessment of services provided by the public sector, although marketing issues are not involved as they might be in a private sector context. There are, however, some pitfalls involved in using such information as a measure of program success. The principal problem is that clients do not have an absolute frame of reference for judging the quality of service they have received. The question, "What can I expect of the rehabilitation process?" is an ever-present one and may vary according to personal attitudes, expectations established in orientations provided by program staff, and the type of rehabilitation needs of the individual client. Despite these drawbacks, client satisfaction provides an independent measure of programs' general efforts and degree of success in adapting to handicapped farmworkers' needs.

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TABLE IV-9  
MSFW'S RATING OF EXPERIENCE IN SECTION 312 PROGRAM -- SURVEY STATES

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	<u>CALIFORNIA</u>		<u>ILLINOIS</u>		<u>TEXAS</u>		<u>FLORIDA</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
<b>TOTAL</b>	58	100%	82	100%	77	100%	35	100%	252	100%
EXCELLENT	10	17%	35	43%	15	20%	6	17%	66	26%
GOOD	15	26%	28	34%	40	52%	7	20%	90	36%
FAIR	11	19%	8	10%	15	20%	9	26%	43	17%
POOR	14	24%	10	12%	1	1%	4	11%	29	12%
DON'T KNOW/ NO OPINION	8	14%	1	1%	6	8%	9	25%	24	9%

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Source: E.H. White and Company Survey, 1986, Q. 22, includes Status 08 MSWF's not accepted for receipt of VR services.

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Table IV-9 provides an overview of client satisfaction with their overall experience in the Section 312 state projects where clients were interviewed.

As can be seen from the above Table IV-9, overall client satisfaction was higher in Illinois and Texas than in California or Florida. The most obvious factor is that few of the California clients had received physical restoration services (only 7% of total respondents) while more clients in Illinois (44%) and Texas (52%) had received restoration services. Since rehabilitation plans where the primary service is physical restoration are likely to be more straightforward than one which involve retraining, the variance in client satisfaction must be seen in this context. There was much more divided opinion in Florida among clients about the value of the program, with some clients expressing great satisfaction, while others including the "don't know" category felt they hadn't received much of any worth from the program.

There is some variation in clients' overall rating of their program experience by program status. Table IV-10 presents the crosstabulation of clients' opinion of the program by status.

TABLE IV-10  
MSEW'S RATING OF EXPERIENCE IN PROGRAM BY STATUS -- SURVEY STATES  
(N=253)

	OPEN		CLOSED			
	APPLICANT	IN-PLAN	NO VR	REHABILIT.	NON-REHAB	
TOTAL	55 100%	75 100%	60 100%	48 100%	15 100%	
EXCELLENT	24 44%	16 21%	10 17%	11 23%	6 40%	
GOOD	20 36%	32 43%	11 18%	23 48%	5 33%	
FAIR	4 7%	17 23%	12 20%	8 17%	1 7%	
POOR	5 9%	5 7%	13 22%	4 8%	2 13%	
DON'T KNOW	2 4%	5 6%	14 20%	2 4%	1 7%	

Source: E.H. White and Company Survey, 1986.



The excellent ratings given to the program by MSFW's in applicant status is likely to be related to the fact that the most intensive counseling contact with clients is at this point in the process.

It is also worthwhile to note that even those clients closed "unsuccessfully" in status 28 or 30 are quite pleased with their program experience. Based on interviewers reports of conversations with clients we believe that the major factors determining client satisfaction were rapport with counselors and clients' assessment of whether they had received any significant services at all. Clients' were quite aware of the constraints and many among those who had not been successfully rehabilitated would give counselors high ratings "for trying hard" even if they had not achieved their objectives; others among those not rehabilitated pointed out that they had not been able to follow the rehabilitation plan.





## SECTION V: SPECIFIC COMPONENTS OF THE SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL

In this Section we discuss Section 312 project performance in specific areas of the VR process. There is a particular emphasis on elements which have been stressed in the service delivery model for service to MSFW's such as outreach, appropriate vocational evaluation, and coordination with other agencies serving MSFW's.

The discussion follows the logical progression of the provision of VR services, beginning with outreach and continuing through post-placement services. The topics discussed in this section are the following:

- o Outreach
- o Application and Acceptance for Service
- o Diagnostic Services/Medical Evaluation
- o Vocational Evaluation
- o Development of Individual Written Rehabilitation Plans
- o Counseling
- o Vocational Training and Remedial Education
- o Physical Restoration
- o Maintenance Support
- o Placement and Post-Placement Services



FINDING V-1: (OUTREACH) Section 312 projects have successfully reached out to make MSFW's aware of VR services. Outreach strategies emphasize coordination with other organizations providing service to MSFW's with little direct outreach. Paraprofessional outreach/counseling staff are particularly effective in this activity.

RECOMMENDATION V-1: Outreach efforts, which are quite expensive, should use paraprofessional staff for this function whenever possible. State agencies should, in their planning efforts, review whether existing networks of referral organizations are adequate to provide equitable access to all subgroups among MSFW's (e.g. youth, women, language minorities).

Because farmworkers lack familiarity with available social services, outreach efforts have been thought to be an essential component of vocational rehabilitation services to them. Outreach efforts in Section 312 projects, necessarily, vary from state to state because patterns of migrant and seasonal farmworkers' residence varies from area to area. In areas with migrant camps, MSFW's are clustered in dense pockets of population (e.g., Illinois) while in other areas (e.g., the Winter Garden Area of Texas) MSFW's live in outlying rural areas. Also, the configuration of networks of farmworker service agencies vary from area to area.

All the projects have devoted substantial resources to the outreach effort and outreach is, generally, adequate. Models vary slightly from state to state but the vocational rehabilitation counselor, a counseling assistant, or rehabilitation technician is responsible for outreach and will often meet with clients in informal settings or at other organizations' facilities. In most, but not all, states the project staffed these positions with bilingual/bicultural individuals. In the sites where outreach workers were not bilingual/bicultural (Virginia's Eastern shore, Florida's Belle Glade office) there was under-representation of significant ethnic groups, usually Hispanics, in the caseload.

Outreach is examined by looking at the source of client referrals. Table V-1 provides an overview of the referral pattern for the MSFW projects in relation to national patterns. Table V-1 reports referral sources as recorded in state MIS data and, also, as determined by asking clients, "How did you first hear about the rehabilitation program?"



As can be seen in Table V-1, there is a great deal of variation from state to state in referral sources. Interviews with Section 312 project counselors reveal that the VR projects actively seek referrals from any organizations judged to be serving MSFW's effectively. Not only is there variation among states in organizations felt to be in touch with MSFW's, but there is also great variation from one local office to another. The variations represent an adaption to the local social ecology.

TABLE V-1  
LEADING SOURCES OF MSFW REFERRAL/INFORMATION ON SERVICES<sup>84</sup>

INFORMATION <sup>85</sup> SOURCE	MSFW'S CALIFORNIA	MSFW'S ILLINOIS	MSFW'S TEXAS	MSFW'S FLORIDA	312 PROJ NATIONAL	NATIONAL 110 PROG
MIG HEALTH COMM. HEALTH	5%	67%	37%	19%	14%	11%
FRIENDS, FAM, SELF-REFERRAL	22%	38%	21%	44%	28%	34%
VOC REHAB. COUNSELOR	7%	27%	4%	5%	6%	N.A.
EDUCATIONAL ORG,	--	2%	1%	8%	10%	13%
EMPLOYMENT SERVICE	12%	--	1%	--	8%	3%
HOSPITAL	3%	--	1%	14%	3%	9%
SSA	--	--	3%	--	2%	4%
SOC. SERV	15%	2%	13%	--	6%	4%
PRIVATE ORG CBO, LEGAL SRV.	27%	4%	5%	3%	3%	N.A.

<sup>84</sup> Columns headed MSFW derive from the E.H. White survey; columns headed "National" derive from State MIS data (all 11 projects) and RSA data (1983 Annual Report), respectively.

<sup>85</sup> State-by-state data on how MSFW's heard about VR services (multiple information sources) are not strictly comparable to National MIS data on referral source (a single referral source).





MSEW's were also asked what considerations they had in mind in deciding to seek VR services. Table V-2 below gives an overview of the major considerations.

TABLE V-2  
FACTORS INFLUENCING MSEW'S DECISION TO SEEK VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

	CALIFORNIA		ILLINOIS		TEXAS		FLORIDA		TOTAL	
	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
TOTAL	59	100%	82	100%	77	100%	36	100%	254	100%
WANT TO WORK	41	73%	12	16%	32	42%	12	33%	97	41%
WANT SOCIAL SVCS. HELP	3	5%	22	29%	18	23%	7	19%	50	20%
WANT MEDICAL HELP	4	7%	12	16%	21	27%	8	22%	45	18%
WANT SKILLS TRAINING	9	16%	--	--	5	7%	2	5%	16	6%
FAMILY/FRIENDS	6	11%	43	56%	8	10%	6	17%	63	25%

SOURCE: E.H. White and Company survey, 1986, Q. 7, "What influenced you most to decide to get involved in the vocational rehabilitation program? Did anything else influence you?"

A measure of the "friendliness" of the outreach is that family and friends supported MSEW's applications for service. Considerations involved in applying for VR services varied by age. Clients in the 30-50 age group were influenced more by wanting to work than by family involvement while both older and younger clients were relatively more influenced by other family members.<sup>86</sup>

Although the original service delivery model stressed outreach efforts in which vocational rehabilitation staff would go directly to migrant camps and to the fields to reach MSEW's, this approach is not currently used very much.



### Coordination with Migrant Health Clinics

Vocational rehabilitation agencies are coordinating especially well with migrant health clinics and these clinics are a major source of referrals. Since the migrant health clinics are unable to provide their patients with hospitalization or physical restoration services, vocational rehabilitation projects provide the only source of such assistance and are, therefore, a natural partner for migrant health organizations. In Illinois and in Texas, VR counselors would regularly visit migrant health clinics in remote areas as part of outreach efforts.

### Coordination with Migrant Education

The predominant pattern of farmworker disability is one of occupational disabilities. There was little coordination with migrant education, simply because this program was more in touch with younger students than with teenagers who are eligible for VR. Therefore, youth make up a small proportion of rehabilitation clients. Referrals are usually from special education programs in the schools; counselors believe that these programs have done a good job of identifying handicapped youth. The projects in New York and Virginia relied more on schools for referrals than other states and coordination was good.

### Coordination with the Employment Service

The state employment service is a significant source of referrals in several states. The importance of the employment service as part of the outreach network varies because of the states' varying competencies in providing job-related services to farmworkers and the particular coordinating arrangements with the vocational rehabilitation program. Coordination with the employment service seemed weaker in states where migrants made up a major

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<sup>86</sup> Crosstabulation of CDECD (Question 7) by age. 39% of the 50+ years age group were influenced by family or friends to seek VR, while only 12% of the 30-39 age group were influenced by friends.



portion of the farm labor force than in the Western United States, where seasonal farmworkers make up the bulk of the labor force. This quite probably relates to the predominance of labor contractors' crew chiefs as the primary labor intermediary in the Eastern Migrant Stream and the direct contacts with migrants from large agribusiness harvesting/canning operations in the midwest.

#### Coordination with Other Public Agencies

Public assistance agencies are a ubiquitous but not very important source of referrals, because of the low proportion of MSFW's who receive public assistance. In addition, local welfare agencies engaged in very little outreach to MSFW's. The Social Security Administration also provides some referrals but is not one of the agencies involved in active outreach to them, so is relatively less important.

#### Use of Media for Outreach

There is little evidence that non-traditional approaches to outreach (e.g., using radio or television media) are effective methods of outreach. Although seemingly effective media campaigns were used by at least two states, Idaho and New York, personal contact and word-of-mouth were more effective ways to reach farmworkers, according to most counselors. The E.H. White and Company survey of MSFW clients did not include the states which are using Hispanic media most actively to reach MSFW's so it is not surprising that media was not mentioned by MSFW's as a source of information about VR.

#### Workers' Compensation, Employers, and Legal Services

Despite the high proportion of farmworker disabilities which are occupationally-related, the workers' compensation system is not an important source of referrals. Workers' Compensation coverage of MSFW's is uneven and VR agency relations with Workers' Compensation insurance carriers and applicants' attorneys vary from state to state. Although California, Illinois, Florida, and Texas cover MSFW's, the benefits package varies.<sup>87</sup>





Outreach to employers was mentioned as a possible means of establishing contact with injured workers in two states, but this approach was not used vigorously , although the Florida 312 project has established arrangements for migrant workers who did not pass the pre-employment physical at sugar mills to be referred to the project.

Legal service programs also were a relatively unimportant source of referrals and there was not much evidence of coordination between these agencies and the vocational rehabilitation projects except in Illinois, where both organizations had been involved in addressing the issue of field sanitation and in California, where the CRLA office in Salinas was an important referral source.

#### Farmworker Employment Training Organizations

These organizations were not an important source of referrals in most of the Section 312 projects, although close working relationships existed in California, Idaho, New York, and Washington.

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<sup>87</sup> MET, Farmworker Protective Laws, 1979. Workers' Compensation coverage of MSFW's is a complex issue well beyond the scope of this report. However, it deserves to be noted that in each of the major four states surveyed there are loopholes in the coverage which make it extremely uncertain that an industrially-injured MSFW will receive private sector rehabilitation services. For example, rehabilitation services are not part of the benefits package in Texas (source: the Executive Director, Texas Industrial Accident Board); in California, many MSFW applicants end up in litigation since carriers hold that many MSFW's cannot benefit from VR services (source: Ms. Nora Coryell, Bilingual VR Consultant, Salinas). In Illinois, employers with less than 500 worker-days hired labor in a quarter are exempt from mandatory coverage (source: MET). Also, it is generally held that applicants' attorneys may be reluctant to secure VR services before a case is settled. In at least these four states, workers' compensation was not a useful source of referrals.



## Outreach to Migrants

Information on the adequacy of outreach to migrants is not available in state MIS records. However, the high representation of migrants in three of the four states surveyed is evidence of the successful outreach efforts by these states. In Illinois, 58% of the MSFW's surveyed were migrants; in Texas, 46% were migrants; in California, 12% were migrants. The low proportion of migrants in California is because the labor force in California is more likely to consist of seasonal farmworkers than in the other states.<sup>88</sup>

The low proportion of migrants among the Florida interviews is surprising. Although those interviewed may have included less migrants than the general caseload, the Florida project was not actively involved in outreach and probably did not reach migrants. Of the clients interviewed, however, 47% were former migrants who had settled out in Belle Glade.

Counselor interviews also provided a basis for assessing adequacy of outreach to migrants and, understandably, varied greatly from one local office to another, with little relation to stated program philosophy. Illinois and Texas both seemed unusually effective in reaching migrants. An isolated instance in which a California counselor made a 200-mile round trip from El Centro to Blythe, on the Arizona border, to go door to door in a trailer camp where many migrants stayed was the most extraordinary effort we heard.

Migrants tended to hear about the VR program in different ways than seasonal farmworkers did. Forty-two percent of migrants heard about the VR program from migrant health clinics, while only 20% of seasonal farmworkers heard about VR from this source. But, migrants were also more likely to hear about VR from the active outreach efforts of a VR counselor than were seasonal farmworkers (20% migrants vs. 10% seasonals).

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<sup>88</sup> It should be noted that the E.H. White screening question for migrants, "At any point during the last year, did you or your family leave town to work in farmwork somewhere else?" provided a more stringent definition of "migrant" than federal definitions (which require only that the farmworker have left an area for one day). In addition, some migrants in Illinois answered "no" to the screening question because they had not left town (Hoopeston) to work; they had left to return "home" to Texas. Therefore, the proportion of migrants in the Illinois program is understated.



The major homebase states studied, Florida and Texas, each represent unique cases. Texas was extremely successful in serving migrants because the Texas Rehabilitation Commission could provide assistance during the winter months when migrants were not working. Florida was less successful, in part, because Florida continues to have quite strong winter employment, making it more difficult to find migrants and provide services without interrupting ongoing work or search for work.

### Overall Adequacy of Outreach

It is almost impossible for one who is unfamiliar with rural areas with high concentrations of farmworkers to appreciate the difficulties of reaching out to a population where entire families work from dawn till dusk, where telephones are a rarity, street addresses nonexistent, and where housing may consist of a row of sheds in the woods, or a one-room house built behind another cluster of houses, or an old trailer. In East-Central Illinois, the travel time from the VR office to Hoopeston, a dense cluster of migrant camps, is three hours. In the Winter Garden area of Texas, some clients lived over 80 miles from the nearest VR office, in small ranches 15 miles up dirt roads.

Given these circumstances, it is not surprising that projects have turned to outreach methods that rely on networking, rather than the home visits, or trips to fields originally envisioned in the service delivery model.

As it is, outreach accounts for approximately 40% of the staff effort in most of the Section 312 vocational rehabilitation projects. Hence, outreach competes with other important activities such as counseling and placement assistance to job-ready clients. The existing networking efforts are practical and appropriate. Counselors and outreach workers may attend community meetings, visit health clinics once a week, or visit the home of a family referred by another agency.

A reasonable standard for outreach is to assume that the Section 312 projects should afford the handicapped MSFW population the same access to VR that the general public has, by actively reaching out to the more isolated MSFW population. A recent survey provides a benchmark figure showing that







approximately 4% of the disabled population have talked to a VR agency counselor in the past year.<sup>89</sup>

Adequacy of outreach efforts is reviewed by comparing total estimated numbers of MSFW's served by a VR agency per year with the estimated population of handicapped MSFW's (see State Maps of Section 312 project service areas with estimates of handicapped MSFW's). However, due to uncertainties in matching the overlays of estimated MSFW populations (based on county-level data) with actual catchment areas and peculiarities of MSFW residence (e.g. higher than predicted numbers of MSFW's living in urban Santa Clara county in California, uncommon proportion of MSFW's in the Ontario-Caldwell area in Eastern Idaho/Western Oregon) these are very rough estimating tools. Also, "penetration" is inevitably fairly low in the areas where MSFW's are most densely concentrated: in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas, the San Joaquin Valley of California, and south Florida.

Table V-3 on the next page, ranks the level of service to the estimated handicapped MSFW's as high, medium, or low. Offices serving less than 1% of the estimated handicapped population are rated low, those serving between 1-4% are medium, and those with more than 4% are high. As can be seen from this Table, most offices are providing service in a range which suggests that outreach is reaching farmworkers effectively. However it must be remembered that there remain important policy questions regarding the level of "penetration" desired in order to afford adequate access to MSFW's. Although projects have done a good job of outreach, there is a large number of handicapped farmworkers still in need of services.

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<sup>89</sup> California Disability Survey, Table 7-12, p.200. It is noted that this survey reproduces the results of the 1972 SSA Disability Survey, but has the advantage of breaking out the number of handicapped persons who have seen a VR counselor (as opposed to SSDI office). The ratio changes, depending on age, severity of disability, and number of disabling conditions, but we estimate 8% over a 2-year period as the best approximation of the MSFW disabled population. Thus the 4% figure serves as a benchmark for outreach over a one-year period.



TABLE V-3  
LEVELS OF SERVICE  
BASED ON ESTIMATED POPULATION OF HANDICAPPED MSEW'S

<u>STATE/CATCHMENT AREA</u>		<u>HIGH</u>	<u>MODERATE</u>	<u>LOW</u>
CALIFORNIA:	El Centro		***	
	Fresno			***
	San Jose	***		
	Salinas		***	
COLORADO:	Delta	***		
FLORIDA:	Belle Glade		***	
IDAHO:	Caldwell		***	
	Twin Falls	***		
	Pocatello	***		
	Idaho Falls		***	
ILLINOIS:	Bloomington	***		
	Anna	***		
NEW YORK:	Buffalo	***		
	Rochester		***	
	Albany	***		
	Poughkeepsie		***	
TEXAS (TRC)	Winter Garden		***	
	Rio Grande Valley			***
	Panhandle		***	
TEXAS (TCB):	Rio Grande Valley	***		
	Laredo	***		
UTAH:	Farmington	***		
	Ogden	***		
	Salt Lake	***		
	Provo			***
VIRGINIA:	Eastern Shore			***
	South-Central	***		
	South-West	***		
	Roanoke	***		
WASHINGTON:	Mt. Vernon			***



### Unserved Handicapped MSFW's

E.H. White and Company interviewed a small number of handicapped MSFW's, 24 persons, who had not received services from the Section 312 projects in the area, in order to explore the patterns of outreach by the projects and to see if any clear cut patterns emerged. Thirteen were interviewed (54%) in California, 6 (25%) in Illinois, and 5 (21%) in Texas.

The reasons for their not having received services were quite straightforward. Twenty-two of those interviewed (92%) did not know that vocational rehabilitation services existed. One of the others, a lettuce worker involved in a litigated Workers' Compensation claim, had been advised by his lawyer not to apply for VR services, although he wanted to. The other unserved MSFW had known of VR and had applied but had not followed through "because it took too long to receive service".

The unserved group seemed quite severely disabled. Only 20% had continued to work after becoming disabled. Of the 80% whose disability was so serious they could not continue to work at all, 20% did not plan to work again. However, since this group was part of the group that did not know VR services existed, they may have entered the ranks of discouraged workers because they knew of no way to overcome their handicap. It was not possible to explore in the interview the exact degree of their attachment to the labor force. Some of these discouraged workers might have not been eligible for VR services because they were not intending to work; others might have changed their minds had they thought it possible to return to work.

The pattern of disabilities of the unserved MSFW's interviewed was typical of MSFW's, although more of the unserved had orthopedic disabilities (71%) than the served. The unserved MSFW sample also included one amputee, one person with an auditory disability, one with a visual disability, and four persons with a disability in RSA's "other" category. Almost half of the unserved MSFW's (46%) had been disabled in a work-related accidents; another five (21%) had been injured in non-work accidents, while six suffered from illnesses not related to work.





The handicapped MSFW's interviewed who had not been served by the Section 312 program were quite similar to those who were served. The most noticeable difference between the groups is that the unserved group had a larger family size (4.6 persons average as compared to 3.7) and a lower educational level (5.7 years) than those who were served (7.7 for rehabilitated clients). The migrants had an educational level (4.7 years) almost two years lower than the seasonal farmworkers (6.6 years). As with the served group, the younger farmworkers were much better educated than the older ones. The overwhelming majority (87%) were predominantly Spanish-speaking, but among these Spanish-speakers, there were three respondents who were, also, fluent in English.

Only 16% of the unserved were receiving maintenance support from a program of public assistance; two respondents were SSDI recipients, one was an AFDC recipient. Another was a Workers' Compensation recipient, while the other received State Disability Insurance. Another 30% did, however, receive food stamp assistance.

Based on the very small numbers of unserved handicapped MSFW's interviewed, it is only possible to conclude that there is no clearly defined group of MSFW's who the Section 312 projects have failed to reach. Increased outreach efforts might have facilitated the unserved interviewees' access to VR services easier. However, it is not possible to draw very firm conclusions regarding the best means of reaching this group, who seemed a bit more difficult to reach, based on their slightly lower educational level and awareness of available social services.

It is clear that increased outreach would provide VR services to handicapped MSFW's who are not presently receiving them. But, at the same time, it is not reasonable to expect any program to achieve 100% penetration of the universe of need. Increased outreach and increased service capacity would, indeed, provide services to other handicapped MSFW's who, like those we interviewed, are very interested in receiving support to return to work, but who are unaware that such support is available. However, we believe that increased outreach constitutes a valuable program strategy only if there is the capacity to provide substantive VR services to those who do become clients of the VR agency.



While outreach efforts had not completely saturated communities, the projects' accomplishments in providing equitable access to service were remarkable. Improvements in coverage of the service area would have been achieved at the cost of decrease in quality of rehabilitation services. The projects had achieved an excellent balance between outreach and other competing program activities.

Although limited resources have been allocated quite effectively, it is important to recognize that few of the states have achieved total coverage of the major farmworker areas in their states. The Section 312 project offices afford easy access to handicapped MSFW's but there is little evidence that non-project offices have achieved similar success in serving MSFW's.<sup>90</sup>

Five of the eleven Section 312 grantees have achieved high levels of coverage of most major MSFW areas in the state, (Idaho, Illinois, Texas [TRC], Texas [TCB], Utah). But, even though Texas has done an excellent job in building a service delivery network, the level of MSFW population is so high that need is not yet met. Coverage in some of the major MSFW states (California, Florida, and Washington) is still inadequate. This is because these states have very large and geographically dispersed populations of MSFWs.

Cost considerations are likely to preclude extensive outreach except where federal funding is available, because regional managers, office managers, and individual counselors in state vocational rehabilitation agencies are striving to maximize "production" within tight time budgets and financial budgets. Spending resources (either time or money) on outreach to the farmworker community is not a high priority in a context where the primary measure of performance is total number of rehabilitations. Although MSFW

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<sup>90</sup> RSA-300, and the subsequent RSA-911 reporting forms do not require state VR agencies to code migrant and seasonal farmworkers as 'MSFW'; this code should be used only to identify "special program" participants, i.e. Section 312 project enrollees. The only state which has maintained data on MSFW's in non-project offices is California. Service in non-project offices is much lower than would be expected from the population of MSFW's in 5 of 6 offices reported as part of the California farm labor project (Bakersfield, Visalia, Santa Barbara, Anaheim, Sacramento, San Diego).





rehabilitation rates are similar to other clients, the amount of time invested in MSFW cases (including time-consuming outreach) is greater than for other cases, lowering individual counselor "productivity." Section 312 funding has provided an important and effective incentive to devote limited agency resources to affording migrant and seasonal farmworkers this access.

### Summary/Relevant Evaluation Standards

The evaluation standards relevant to outreach activities are:

#### Planning

- 1.5 Farmworker service projects should incorporate into the planning process attention to specific coordination linkages with both employers and appropriate human service providers serving the farmworker community.

#### Service Delivery

- 2.1 Farmworker service projects should provide appropriate means for making the farmworker population aware of the availability of vocational rehabilitation service, with particular attention to access to services by subpopulations among farmworkers.
- 2.2 Farmworker service projects should provide means to serve clients which take into account individual language use and cultural mores.

#### Management

- 3.4 State vocational rehabilitation agencies should have appropriate coordination arrangements with other organizations providing services to farmworkers. This coordination should include, at a minimum, the coordination specified in Section 312 of the Rehabilitation Act.

#### Direct Service Outcomes

- 5.3 The direct service impact of farmworker service projects should be measured, in part, by ability to achieve success in equitably serving farmworker subpopulations such as women, monolinguals, migrants, and the seriously handicapped.

The Section 312 program has been very successful in relation to the above evaluative criteria which relate to outreach efforts. Project planning has included attention to networking with other service providers, local geography, and client needs. Staffing is generally representative of the composition of the local MSFW community. There is usually equitable access to all subpopulations among the local MSFW communities. Close coordination with other agencies serving MSFW's has been a vital component of this achievement.





FINDING V-2: (OUTREACH) Outreach efforts by Section 312 projects have successfully established contact with the most disadvantaged among handicapped MSFW's. However, approximately 15% of project clients are rural agricultural workers who do not fit the profile of the MSFW population, having a wider range of work experience and better education than the typical MSFW.

RECOMMENDATION V-2: RSA should encourage state VR agencies to give top priority to serving the most disadvantaged among the agricultural workforce, seasonally employed farmworkers or migratory workers whose primary occupation is farmwork.

The basic criterion for eligibility for VR services is found at 34 CFR 361.31, which states that services will be provided upon determination of:

1. The presence of a physical or mental disability which, for the individual, constitutes or results in a substantial handicap to employment; and
2. A reasonable expectation that vocational rehabilitation services may benefit the individual in terms of employability.

The purpose of the Section 312 program is to support special projects serving or expanding service to migrant and seasonal farmworkers. RSA regulations provide a brief definition of migrant and seasonal farmworkers, stating that a MSFW is a person who:

... on a seasonal or other temporary basis engages in ordinary agricultural operations or in services incident to the preparation of farm commodities for the market ...

Generally, the determination as to whether an applicant for vocational rehabilitation services is a farmworker is straightforward. However, some definitional issues arise due to the ambiguities in the definition of migrant and seasonal farmworkers promulgated by RSA.

The crux of this issue is that the Rehabilitation Act requires that the Section 312 program serve "handicapped individuals, as determined in accordance with rules prescribed by the Secretary of Labor who are migratory agricultural farmworkers, and to members of their families."<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> (footnote on following page)



In site visits to Section 312 projects, it became clear that the operational definition of MSFW's is quite broad and that projects were generally considering all agricultural employees to be MSFW's. It is recommended that projects be encouraged to give top priority to those farm workers who are neither casual agricultural labor (working less than 25 days a year in farmwork) or permanently employed farm hands, since it is this group that experiences the severe barriers to employment which was a prime consideration in the establishment of a program of special projects to serve MSFW's.

In the states where clients were interviewed by E.H. White and Company field researchers, 86% fit the "classical" profile of being migrant and seasonal farmworkers, based on a recent history of seasonal or migratory farmwork, or being the dependent of such a farmworker. The remaining 14% were less closely tied to the farm labor market, including both settled-out ex-farmworkers, casual farmworkers, and others.

Analysis of key demographic variables (sex, age, education) show that the Section 312 projects provided equitable service to applicants, without "creaming" (selection based on demographic profile). It is particularly heartening to see that the projects accepted applicants with low educational levels as readily as more educated applicants, since educational level is an important determinant of ease in achieving rehabilitation. Table V-4 provides a comparison of applicants closed without being accepted for service (status 08) and applicants accepted for service (status 02).

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<sup>91</sup> (footnote from previous page)

The DOL definition of MSFW's, found at CFR 20, Part 633, states that MSFW's must have been employed at least 25 days in farmwork during any consecutive 12 month period in the previous 24 months (excluding time during which the person was disabled) or have earned \$400 in farmwork. They must also have been primarily employed in farmwork on a seasonal basis, without a constant year-round salary. Farmwork is defined as employment in an industry in SIC industries 01 (Agricultural Production-Crops), 02 (Agricultural Production-Livestock), and 07 (Agricultural Services), with the exception of several sub-industry groups including landscape and horticultural services and veterinary services.



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TABLE V-4  
PROFILE OF STATUS 08 AND STATUS 02 MSFW'S

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<u>CHARACTERISTIC</u>	<u>NOT ACCEPTED STATUS 08 (N=60)</u>	<u>APPLICANTS STATUS 02 (N=55)</u>
Male/Female Ratio	68%/32%	73%/27%
Educational Level	7.9	8.0
Mean Age	37.6	34.7
% Spanish-speaking	63%	78%
% Migrant	42%	60%

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Source: MIS Data - 8 states: California, Illinois, Texas (TRC), Texas (TCB), Florida, New York, Colorado, Idaho. Language and migrant data is only from the survey states: California, Texas, Florida, and Illinois.

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#### Related Evaluation Standards

The relevant evaluation standard is 2.1, having to do specifically with adequacy of outreach. Program-wide performance in outreach was excellent although the Florida and the Virginia projects did not have adequate outreach to reach many of the migrants, or Hispanic MSFW's in the Eastern Migrant stream.

#### Service Delivery

- 2.1 Farmworker service projects should provide appropriate means for making the farmworker population aware of the availability of vocational rehabilitation service, with particular attention to access to services by subpopulations among farmworkers.





**FINDING V-3: (APPLICATION AND ACCEPTANCE FOR SERVICE)** The Section 312 projects are providing service to 52% of all applicants, an acceptance ratio slightly lower than RSA's overall acceptance ratio of 60%. The reasons for pre-acceptance closure are also different than the VR system as a whole.

**RECOMMENDATION V-3:** State VR agencies should continue their efforts to develop streamlined acceptance procedures which "fast track" MSFW applicants into VR services more rapidly than in the traditional model. Intense counseling contact early in the VR process should be emphasized as a means to avoid "losing" potential clients.

Only a small proportion of the MSFW applicants for VR services who are closed prior to acceptance (status 08) are ineligible for service. The predominant reason for pre-acceptance closure is that clients are lost or moved or "failed to cooperate". Table V-5 gives a comparison of reasons for pre-acceptance closure in the Section 312 program as compared to RSA national figures.

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TABLE V-5  
LEADING REASONS FOR PRE-ACCEPTANCE CLOSURE

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REASON FOR CLOSURE	SEC. 312	NATIONAL
Refused services or failed to cooperate	32%	43%
Moved or lost contact	27%	16%
No disability or no vocational handicap	13%	16%
Infeasible-handicap too severe	10%	8%
Other	10%	13%
Institutionalized/transfer to another agency	7%	2%
Death	1%	1%

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Source: MIS data - 8 State projects, E.H. White and Company, 1986.  
National data from RSA 1983 Annual Report.

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It is impressive that the Section 312 projects are screening out very few MSFW's as having a handicap too severe to serve. The proportion of clients determined to be ineligible because of not being disabled or not having a vocational handicap is also lower than the national pattern.



As can be seen from the above Table V-5, the major difference between the Section 312 program and overall VR system is that there are more closures because applicants have moved or lost contact and less because of refusal to cooperate or refusal of services. This is not surprising; MSFW's are quite mobile and highly in need of services.

Interviews with applicants who had not been accepted for service show some significant differences between this group and other applicants.<sup>92</sup>

The applicants who were not accepted for service were highly motivated to work; in this regard they are most similar to the group who were successfully rehabilitated. Fifty-one percent of status 08 closures mentioned wanting to work as a reason for contacting the VR program,<sup>93</sup> as did 44% of successfully rehabilitated clients. In contrast, only 23% of other applicants mentioned wanting to work as a reason for contacting the program.

Section 312 projects provided a good proportion of pre-acceptance closures with diagnostic services and vocational evaluations. One third reported receiving a vocational evaluation and 58% received medical diagnostic work. The MSFW's closed prior to acceptance considered these medical services valuable, not just a formality. They were, however, very much less likely to feel that the assessment process was valuable than those who went on to participate in the vocational rehabilitation program. While 78% of applicants and 75% of rehabilitated clients felt they had learned a lot or something from the vocational assessment process, only 22% of the pre-acceptance closures felt the process had been useful. They were strongly negative about the process; 67% stated positively that they had learned very little or that the vocational evaluation process was a waste of time.

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<sup>92</sup> As can be seen in Table V-4 above, status 08 closures are not significantly different demographically from MSFW's accepted for VR service. However, this group does differ somewhat in attitudes. The information on status 08 closures is from survey responses in California, Illinois, and Texas.

<sup>93</sup> E.H. White and Company survey, 1986.



MSFW's surveyed were all asked if there were any aspects of the rehabilitation process which was particularly difficult or frustrating and whether their counselor was helpful in resolving the problem they were experiencing. The MSFW's who were closed prior to acceptance were five times more likely than others surveyed to find the medical diagnostic process difficult or frustrating (21% of pre-acceptance vs. 4% of others).<sup>94</sup> In addition, 47% of pre-acceptance closures felt that counselors were not helpful at all in resolving the problems they experienced.<sup>95</sup>

The picture of the MSFW closed prior to acceptance for VR services is one of a highly motivated client, who is likely to be more demanding and impatient than other clients, in many respects difficult to serve. While Section 312 projects have provided valuable services to these MSFW's, it is likely that closer attention to the specific counseling needs of this group would result both in a greater acceptance rate for this group, and in further improvements in rehabilitation success because of this group's strong attachment to the labor market. Such efforts are particularly appropriate because the outreach effort in contacting MSFW's is time-consuming and, thus, expensive. Once projects have invested in the outreach process, it is strategically desirable to achieve the highest rate of service to those MSFW's closed prior to acceptance who are eligible for VR services.

#### Relevant Evaluation Standards

Evaluation Standard 5.1 was developed specifically to address the question of VR agencies acceptance of prospective clients for service. The standard is the following:

- 5.1 The impact of farmworker service projects should be measured, in part, by their overall rate of success in rehabilitating farmworkers, as determined by:
  - 2) The acceptance rate -- the ratio of clients accepted for service to total closed cases (including those closed without being accepted for service).

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<sup>94</sup> E.H. White and Company survey, 1986. Q15A

<sup>95</sup> E.H. White and Company survey, 1986. Q15B





**FINDING V-4: (DIAGNOSIS/MEDICAL EVALUATION)** Section 312 projects provided medical diagnosis/evaluation work to 73% of the MSFW's interviewed. Although the process generally involved some delays, the information generated was valuable. The primary deficiency of the diagnostic process is that the medical model understates the severity of MSFW vocational handicaps. Since, in states where there is an order of selection, provision of purchased case services rests on a determination that MSFW's are severely handicapped, misclassification of severity may result in denial of services to clients who should receive them.

**RECOMMENDATION V-4 A:** RSA should require Section 312 projects to routinely utilize and evaluate the Functional Assessment Inventory developed by the University of Minnesota in Section 312 projects as a means of improving determinations regarding severity of MSFW vocational handicaps. After an initial 3-year period of using this instrument, its validity with the MSFW population should be assessed and considered for permanent adoption as part of the Section 312 MIS systems.

**RECOMMENDATION V-4 B:** So as to "fast track" MSFW's into the VR system, State Agencies should encourage counseling staff to provide counseling and other services to MSFW's concurrently with diagnostic procedures, wherever presumptive eligibility can validly be established.

Despite the availability of an extensive network of migrant health clinics providing excellent primary health care, migrant and seasonal farmworkers' health status continues to be inferior. In part, this seems to be due to economic pressure; the bulk of clinic visits are for acute illness, for routine children's care, and for prenatal care. Health care management for working adults is a luxury because paid sick leave is seldom available. In addition, the primary health care delivery system is not geared to address the problems of major types of chronic occupational disease (most notably, orthopedic disabilities). There are virtually no resources in the form of community mental health programs that provide outpatient psychological care for farmworkers.

Because the health care delivery system for MSFW's is incomplete, the medical evaluation in connection with determination of a vocational handicap is a valuable service to farmworkers, not simply a pro forma procedure, this traditional aspect of the VR service has genuine relevance to Section 312 projects.



## Determination of Severity of Handicap of MSFW's

VR counselors generally rely on the medical diagnostic procedure as the basis for determination that a client is categorized as severely handicapped or not. Although there is a clear-cut distinction in rehabilitation terminology between disability and handicap, counselors, in practice, rely heavily on medical determinations regarding severity of disability as the basis for determining severity of handicap. The distinction is one of great importance in serving MSFW's because the population is one which is usually more severely handicapped than clearly severely disabled.

Of the MSFW's served by Section 312 projects, 40% were coded as being severely disabled in accordance with RSA Statistical Reporting System guidelines.<sup>96</sup> However, because of the nature of MSFW disabilities and the socioeconomic factors affecting their ability to work, the standard procedure probably misclassifies many individuals who are vocationally handicapped as defined at 34 CFR, Section 361.1 of the RSA regulations. A determination of severe handicap requires that an individual must be "seriously" limited in one or more functional capacities in terms of employability, must require multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time and must have one of a defined list of severe disabilities. However, in addition to this list of disabling conditions specifically designated as severe, individuals may also be determined to be severely handicapped on the basis of experiencing,

... a combination of disabilities determined on the basis of an evaluation of rehabilitation potential to cause comparable substantial functional limitation.

The greatest difficulty in relating MSFW's disabilities to severity of handicap lies in this area, that of determining the degree of functional limitation entailed by a given medically-diagnosed disability. While counselors recognized that MSFW's who were required to engage in heavy physical labor, where wages might be determined by piecework rates, faced serious problems due to their physical disability they found it difficult to

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<sup>96</sup> State MIS data, 8 projects, 1986.



relate these genuine handicaps to functional handicaps within the VR conceptual system. In discussing functional assessment, counselors interviewed stressed the fact that "automatically" severe cases were the easiest to document. Many were reluctant to engage in the more difficult technical determination of functional severity. Because of this problem, we recommend utilization of a standard instrument of functional assessment, the Functional Assessment Inventory, in the Section 312 projects.

#### Functional Assessment of Severity of MSEW Handicap

The Functional Assessment Inventory<sup>97</sup> (FAI) was developed specifically to address the research and administrative requirements of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 in defining severe disability. Crewe and Athelstan state in their introduction,

A number of research and administrative needs also spurred development of the FAI. One was the need for a better definition of severe disability...However, there was little basis except medical diagnosis for determining who qualified for that category. Unfortunately, since the persons within any diagnostic category might differ tremendously from each other in their capacities and limitations, the diagnostic label was a poor basis on which to make decisions about priorities. furthermore, it provided little, if any, information that would be useful in selecting appropriate services or goals. In contrast, functional assessment potentially could provide an operational definition of severity and also furnish information relevant to rehabilitation needs. (p.1, FAI).

The Functional Assessment Inventory has been under development for over 13 years and is now being used widely by the private sector and by two state VR agencies. It requires approximately 10 minutes to complete. Because of its extensive validation and its ease of administration, it presents a straightforward approach to assist Section 312 projects in determining severity.

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<sup>97</sup> Nancy Crewe and Gary Athelstan, Functional Assessment Inventory Manual, Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Institute, 1984







When we examine the scaling of the Functional Assessment Inventory incorporating a number of different components of employability, it becomes evident why the medical model treating "severity" as a function only of physical conditions is inadequate to correctly determine MSFW severity. Only 15 of the 30 rating scales on the Functional Assessment Inventory refer to physical or psychological disability; the other 15 determinants of severity of a client's handicap are based on other employment-related skills and abilities. Migrant and seasonal farmworkers are much more likely than the general public to score low on at least ten of these scales<sup>98</sup>.

The Functional Assessment Inventory codifies counselor experience in rehabilitation. It presents a rather accurate representation of counselor assessment of client "difficulty," "disadvantage," or "employment barriers." Conceivably, as with other instruments normed on the general population, there will be idiosyncrasies in using it with MSFW's; however, its virtue is that it provides a framework to utilize counselors' professional knowledge about a particular population such as MSFW's in the functional assessment. Because of this feature, it is likely not to have a great number of cultural irrelevancies.

We recommend that RSA sponsor a set of counselor training workshops to familiarize Section 312 counselors and VR agency supervisors with the instruments and then proceed to incorporate it into the structure of the Section 312 project operations.

#### Delays in the Diagnostic/Medical Evaluation Process

Counselors interviewed felt that the diagnostic phase was a frequent source of delay in the rehabilitation process. There were often delays in securing medical information of record. Where diagnostic workups were

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<sup>98</sup> Scales where MSFW's are likely to be at a disadvantage include the following: (2) Ability to Read and Write in English, (8) Language Functioning, (17) Work History, (18) Acceptability to Employers, (20) Skills, (22) Access to Job Opportunities, (24) Work Habits, (25) Social Support System, (27) Effective Interaction with Employers and coworkers, (30) Initiative and Problem-Solving Ability.



required, delays were also common. Rural physicians and health organizations are often backlogged. A number of clients interviews mentioned scheduling problems (sometimes due to MSFW's own schedules as well as physician or clinic backlogs). Transportation problems also contributed to delays in scheduling appointments that fit the demanding schedules of both farmworkers and physicians resulted in a drawn-out process for the medical evaluation. Where clients' presenting disabilities required specialists' evaluation, further delays resulted when services were not available locally in the more rural areas.

While medical evaluation is a valuable service, the dilemma which confronts projects is that it is necessary to "fast track" services to farmworkers, particularly migrants. Projects must either speed up the diagnostic process, or initiate services at the same time that diagnostic work is being performed. Project efforts to speed the diagnostic process are impressive; counselors attempt to prepare clients for a relatively lengthy diagnostic process and provide some counseling support during this time. But this is still a phase when MSFW clients are more likely to drop out of the VR process than others.

There are, within the vocational rehabilitation system, severe disincentives to initiating service prior to completion of the diagnostic process. In the survey states where an order of selection was in effect (Illinois and Texas) state policies prohibited provision of purchased case services for non-severe clients. Therefore, counselors feel they are going out on a limb if they provide substantial services before completing the diagnostic process. This issue is a serious one, because the exigencies of service to farmworkers is not only overlooked by current agency management initiatives but is, to a certain degree, in conflict with those initiatives.

Additional improvements in "fast tracking" MSFW clients can, it seems, only be made if each state operating a VR projects looks carefully at its management procedures for medical consultants' review of counselor determinations regarding severity and paperwork requirements for authorization of services. These details are, in the strictest sense, "management" or "operational" issues which cannot be addressed productively at the national



level, except to observe that speed of completing operational procedures has a significant impact on service to MSFW's, who are consumers that are not in a position to tolerate a great deal of delay or to conform well to burdensome requirements for repeated appointments, documentation, etc. Section 312 projects most successful efforts in "fast tracking" seem to stem from developing and maintaining stable operational procedures to speed case management at every point, in turnaround of required paperwork, in minimizing numbers of medical appointments, in assuring that clients and providers keep scheduled appointments, and that mandatory internal review of cases take place speedily.

It is recommended that state VR agencies review the possibility of encouraging counselor determinations of presumed eligibility for VR services, before medical diagnosis/evaluation and vocational evaluation efforts are complete, in order to provide substantial services to MSFW's at the same time that the diagnostic process is being conducted. Obviously, services must still be sequenced rationally (i.e. physical restoration will still continue to require completion of the diagnostic process). However, VR agencies could initiate certain types of training services (e.g. career orientation classes) prior to completion of diagnostic work, if an initial determination of presumed eligibility has been made.

#### Special Approaches used by Projects in Conducting Diagnostic/Evaluation Procedures

In several projects, vocational rehabilitation staff commonly accompanied clients to medical examinations to interpret and mediate the interaction between clients and doctors. The availability of migrant health clinics was an important determinant in the diagnostic process. Where available, they were the preferred source for diagnostic work; where projects had to rely on private physicians, the process was slower and more complicated.







## Diagnosis/Evaluation of Psychological Disabilities

Evaluation of psychological disabilities presented particular problems with Hispanic MSFW's except where Spanish speaking bilingual/bicultural testing personnel or psychologists familiar with farmworkers were available (in Texas, Utah, and Illinois). Even in these states, the specialists' busy schedules made scheduling difficult, although the projects had developed fairly routine and efficient procedures for the process.

### Relevant Evaluation Standards

Evaluation Standard 2.3 is relevant to this section. It states that:

- 2.3 Farmworker service projects should utilize the best available methods for evaluating clients' rehabilitation potential which are linguistically, culturally, and educationally appropriate and provide clients with clear and understandable information about the results of that evaluation.

The most serious deficiency has been in projects' ability to correctly assess MSFW's rehabilitation potential because of the difficulties in determining severity of MSFW's vocational handicap. The recommended utilization of the Functional Assessment Inventory should improve projects' capabilities in this area.



**FINDING V-5 (VOCATIONAL EVALUATION)** There was consensus among counseling staff in Section 312 projects that standard vocational evaluation procedures had limited effectiveness with MSFW's. However, several state Section 312 projects are engaged in efforts to evaluate, improve, or develop new approaches to vocational evaluation.

**RECOMMENDATION V-5:** RSA should provide assistance to Section 312 projects in disseminating the results of developmental efforts, evaluation data, and/or promising models for the vocational evaluation of MSFW's. Special attention should be given to the development of approaches which secure clients' active involvement in the vocational evaluation process (such as the Job Club model or group workshops). Increased emphasis is also required on providing clients with a greater appreciation of the relation between vocational evaluation and increased employability or earning power.

Only one-third of the MSFW's interviewed reported having received a vocational evaluation. The proportion of MSFW's who received the vocational evaluation, however, varied greatly among the different states. In California, 67% of those interviewed reported having received a vocational evaluation; in Texas, 35% had been evaluated, while in Illinois, only 6% reported having received a vocational assessment.

Approximately half of the MSFW's who did receive vocational evaluations felt they had benefited from them. Table V-6 presents a tabulation of clients' rating of the vocational evaluation process.

Surprisingly, it is in Illinois, a project very interested in vocational assessment, where clients report not having received vocational evaluations. The Illinois Project Director observes that counselors need to become more proficient in using the results of vocational evaluation which may account for the fact that Illinois clients did not recognize that they had received a vocational evaluation.

Older clients were somewhat less likely than younger ones to receive a vocational evaluation in the states surveyed. While 40% of the clients under 50 years of age received vocational evaluations, only 19% of those over 50 did.



TABLE V-6  
MSFW RATING OF THE VOCATIONAL EVALUATION PROCESS

	CALIFORNIA		ILLINOIS		TEXAS		FLORIDA		TOTAL	
	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
LEARNED A LOT	11	28%	1	17%	5	16%	5	26%	22	23%
LEARNED SOMETHING	8	20%	1	17%	15	48%	8	42%	32	33%
LEARNED VERY LITTLE	13	33%	1	17%	6	20%	4	21%	24	25%
WASTE OF TIME	5	13%	2	33%	--	--	1	5%	8	8%
NO OPINION	3	7%	1	17%	5	16%	1	5%	10	10%
TOTAL EVALUATED	40	100%	6	100%	31	100%	19	100%	96	100%

Source: E.H. White and Company Survey, 1986, Question 13B2: "A vocational evaluation or assessment is the process where a rehabilitation counselor tries to understand what kind of work you would best be able to do. Sometimes, it involves tests or work tests, or spending several days seeing how you do at different skills. At other times, it just involves talking over the kinds of things you know how to do. Have you been involved in anything like that? We are interested in how you rate the (vocational evaluation) process? Did you learn more about what you are good at doing from it?"

Among the clients who received a vocational evaluation, a good proportion (60%) of the MSFW's under 50 felt that they had learned a lot or something from the vocational evaluation process, with the most enthusiastic responses coming from the group 30-39 years of age, 30% of whom felt they had learned a lot from the process. The older clients were most negative about the vocational evaluation process, with 66% saying they had learned very little or that it was a waste of time.<sup>99</sup>

<sup>99</sup> Crosstabulations of Q.13B and Q.13B2 by age, E.H. White survey, 1986





Section 312 project counselors and project management had serious reservations regarding the appropriateness and validity of commonly used instruments and procedures for vocational evaluation. Therefore, they usually relied on informal approaches to assessing the vocational potential of farmworkers. These informal procedures seemed to be quite effective as judged by client interviews. Clients (correctly) considered the vocational evaluation procedure to be closely related to the counseling aspects of the rehabilitation process, placing a premium on vocational evaluation information in the context of rehabilitation planning.

The issue of the appropriateness of standard vocational evaluations for use in VR services for MSFW's has attracted attention from at least two states, Illinois and Utah.

#### Evaluation/Modification of Standard Vocational Evaluation Tests

The Illinois Department of Rehabilitation Services project is currently involved in a three-year effort to assess the appropriateness of various testing instruments and procedures. Similar efforts are underway in Utah to evaluate the utility of a variety of psychological test instruments. In addition, other projects have used standardized testing, selectively, in individual cases where counselors felt that it would be useful to clarify questions regarding clients' capabilities.

It is important to distinguish among vocational evaluation instruments/procedures on the basis of their function to a) characterize existing work-related abilities, b) define vocational interests, and c) measure and/or characterize underlying capabilities such as "intelligence" or specific capabilities. In this context, it must be stressed that the value of a vocational evaluation instrument rests, in large measure, on the rehabilitation counselor's skill in carefully defining the types of information he/she needs from the procedure and in interpreting the results generated by the assessment tool.

The general feeling expressed to E.H. White and Company by counseling staff working with farmworkers is that farmworkers' low educational levels



make most "paper and pencil" tests invalid; therefore, the most useful tests are felt to be "hands on" work sampling modules. Three projects make use of the VALPAR work sampling modules; the Illinois project has translated the MESA into Spanish and is using it extensively. The work sampling procedures seem to work rather well. However, several counselors reported that MSFW's disliked the testing environment of rehabilitation facilities. The other drawback is that MSFW's express some incredulity that the testing procedures are relevant to "real" work and jobs. The project response to this has been to provide careful orientation to the testing where possible. To overcome the MSFW's dislike of institutional surroundings (and to save time in the evaluation process), the Illinois project has purchased a station wagon to take the MESA material to test farmworkers in their homes.

Tests of specific skills (e.g., reading, spatial relations) or general aptitudes are not felt to be useful. Although the GATB is available in Spanish, it is not used extensively; it is not felt to be very useful. However, as with other tests, utility rests on interpretation. One vocational rehabilitation professional who finds the GATB useful notes that he can interpret overall profiles within the context of his experience with MSFW's but not rely on standard norms.<sup>100</sup>

Counselors feel that most farmworkers' scores on IQ tests are lower than their actual potential. Even with Spanish-language IQ tests, such as the Baranquilla Rapid Survey Intelligence Test (BARSIT), which is being evaluated by the Illinois project, the Project Director reports that results do not correspond to informal evaluations.

#### Use of Vocational Evaluation Information

The key issue with regard to farmworker vocational assessment is that test data is an input into the development of individual written rehabilitation plans (IWRP's). Even if testing instruments are valid, it is not clear that precise measurement of skills is relevant to IWRP development.

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<sup>100</sup> Florentino Castellon, personal communication, February 23, 1987.



The utility of tests of reading ability is an example of this consideration. The tests measure actual performance and are relatively valid. However, it is not clear whether such information is indeed useful for evaluating a client's potential to secure and hold an entry-level job in the typical rural labor market where reading levels are irrelevant to most jobs (e.g., waitressing, unskilled construction labor). In such jobs, a minimal level of functional literacy is required. Higher reading levels are needed only for a subset of entry-level jobs (e.g., clerical). Given the marginal relevance of aptitudes and skills measured to actual work requirements, it is likely that counselors' informal global assessments of MSFW clients' abilities are as useful as any formal testing procedure. Perhaps the strongest argument for the use of formal aptitude tests is that they provide a means to prove to clients who lack self-confidence that they can do more than they believe they can.

#### Determination of Vocational Interest

Among the possible objectives of vocational assessment, determination of vocational interest is of particular concern because farmworkers' work experience is, typically, very limited. With the exception of the Illinois project (which has used the Spanish version of the Holland Self-Directed Search and the WRIOT) formal approaches to determination of vocational interest seem to be used infrequently. The Illinois project has dropped these because they were not useful.

#### Innovations in Developing Career Awareness as a Basis for Evaluation

Section 312 projects include some innovative approaches to vocational evaluation. The Texas Rehabilitation Commission is addressing the issue of determining vocational interest by conducting two-week work orientation (work adjustment) classes for farmworker clients. The classes include some examination of personal values, personal assessment of work experience, orientation to the nonagricultural labor market, and personal goal-setting. This approach has the important benefit that it provides MSFW's with information on which to basis their consideration of career options. Without such career education efforts, vocational choices are not very meaningful.







The California Department of Rehabilitation Section 312 project is also experimenting in one office with a Spanish-speaking job club (consisting predominantly but not exclusively, consisting of MSFW's) which includes some of these activities. The "group orientation" process is an attractive one; approaches have been developed for other highly disadvantaged populations and evaluated extensively.<sup>101</sup> Similar approaches have also been used successfully in farmworker employment training programs.<sup>102</sup> The group approach is an important feature because it provides participants with the support of a peer group while moving through a difficult transition.

Although curricula for these efforts have not been formalized (the Texas groups are conducted very differently in two of three regions), further development would seem to be extremely useful.

In addition, careful evaluation and dissemination of results would be an important part of a national strategy for dealing with the extremely important issue of career awareness among MSFW's.

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<sup>101</sup> MDRC used a "group orientation" process of this sort in its supported work experiments. A multitude of efforts variously categorized as "job seeking workshops", "pre-vocational training", and "job orientation" workshops were used by CETA programs in local jurisdictions. These were, generally, tailored to the budget and particular population served and are, therefore, not comparable. Practitioners judged them to be most effective with highly disadvantaged clientele. Cf. Robert Taggart, A Fisherman's Guide.

<sup>102</sup> The GED curriculum in several farmworker employment training programs included a good deal of group process work designed to heighten participants' awareness of the world of work and their own vocational orientation in addition to development of academic skills. Since GED participation was open entry/open exit, participation varied but was usually between 3-6 months.



## Relevant Evaluation Standards/Summary

Evaluation standard 2.3 directly addresses the issue of vocational evaluation for MSFW's stating that:

- 2.3 Farmworker service projects should utilize the best available methods for evaluating clients' rehabilitation potential which are linguistically, culturally, and educationally appropriate and provide clients with clear and understandable information about the results of that evaluation.

Projects funded under the Section 312 program have adapted their evaluation procedures to the needs of MSFW's; the vocational evaluation methods in use (which generally consist of informal discussions between clients and bilingual/bicultural counseling staff) are culturally, linguistically, and educationally appropriate. There has been some progress in developing innovative approaches to vocational evaluation which are more appropriate than standard tools, but additional effort is required, both in developing vocational evaluation techniques and in providing MSFW's with the results of evaluations.



**FINDING V-6: (DEVELOPMENT OF INDIVIDUALIZED WRITTEN REHABILITATION PLANS)**  
 Most MSFW's have little awareness of careers outside of farmwork, low educational levels, and limited nonagricultural work experience. Therefore, development of individual rehabilitation plans is a demanding and difficult process. Section 312 projects address these problems informally in the course of counseling and plan development but have not yet given adequate attention to training approaches or curricula which develop career awareness.

**RECOMMENDATION V-6:** RSA should explore means to encourage the development of a short training curriculum designed to increase handicapped MSFW's ability to make career decisions. Such a curriculum should be appropriate for use by small training workshops similar to the current job clubs and work adjustment classes. National Institute of Disability and Handicapped Research involvement in such developmental efforts would be appropriate.

#### MSFW Awareness of Careers Outside of Farmwork

Older MSFW's are much less likely than younger MSFW's to have considered options to farmwork; yet, at the same time, it is this group whose handicaps are likely to pose the most severe constraint on continuing work in agriculture. Clients interviewed by E.H. White and Company were asked if they had ever thought about working outside of farmwork and, if so, in what kind of job. Table V-7 shows the relationship between age and consideration of alternatives to farmwork.

TABLE V-7  
 MSFW'S INTEREST IN JOBS OUTSIDE FARMWORK

<u>AGE COHORT</u>	<u>NEVER CONSIDERED</u>	<u>CONSIDERED ONE JOB</u>	<u>CONSIDERED TWO JOBS</u>
19 OR LESS	3 13%	21 87%	15 63%
20-29	14 27%	37 73%	29 54%
30-39	10 22%	42 78%	28 55%
40-49	17 29%	41 71%	32 55%
50 +	34 53%	30 47%	15 23%
TOTAL ALL AGES	78 31%	171 69%	119 48%

Source: E.H. White and Company Survey, 1986. Q.25 and Q.27 (N=249)





The nonagricultural jobs considered were mostly unskilled jobs in commercial services (39%), human service industries (15%), clerical services (10%), sales (10%), and manufacturing (8%). Other types of jobs made up 18% of the jobs considered. MSFW's considerations of job options seemed practical. Aspirations to skilled jobs peaked in the 40-49 year old group, 19% of whom had considered a skilled job in their area of interest, while the overall rate of skilled jobs considered was only 13%.

Most had become interested in jobs outside of farmwork by talking to friends (30%), but school teachers or counselors had been an influence on vocational interests of another 27% of the MSFW's under 40. Older farmworkers did not consider teachers or counselors to have been an influence. VR agency counselors had influenced the nonagricultural job interests of 9% of the respondents.

Almost a fifth (18%) of the MSFW's who had become interested in nonagricultural work said that they were interested in a type of work because they had done it before.

The youngest of the MSFW's have been influenced by school teachers and counselors in developing a sense of career options. In contrast, the workers in the middle age group have job interests based on previous nonagricultural work experience and talking with friends. The older group has given little thought to any kind of work outside of farmwork. Based on this information it would appear that the younger MSFW's (many of them dependents of farmworkers) are already receiving a substantial degree of vocational input. Although the middle age-group (30-49 years old) are quite interested in jobs outside of farmwork they have very limited experience. It is this group which might most benefit from intensive exploration of career options. Finally, the older age group (50 and over) has not considered any career options, but may seriously need to consider their options in the face of progressively increasing vocational handicaps. This group needs, even before exploring options, to be convinced that it is possible for them to do something other than farmwork.

It deserves note that the influence of VR counselors is evident in the career interests of 10% of the respondents; this is a beginning. We would



argue that, with a concentrated effort, the Section 312 projects can increase their impact on the career awareness of their clients.

Development of a basis for career decision making is a critical aspect of the vocational evaluation of MSFW's. However, Section 312 projects have not had the technical expertise to develop curricula in this area. Some strong foundations exist. The National Institute of Education has developed an excellent conceptual framework, A Conceptual Framework for Career Awareness in Career Decision Making (Charner, Wise, and Randour, 1976) which provides an appropriate starting points in providing MSFW's with the basis for making informed choices regarding career options. This framework, and other existing materials are available which could be adapted to address these issues. For the moment, there is not yet an adequate basis for addressing the problems experienced by MSFW's in clarifying personal values, formulating career plans, evaluating career options, and pursuing those options with an explicit plan.

Because of the importance of full consideration of the options in the development of IWRP's it is recommended that RSA provide the leadership in working with Section 312 projects to develop effective methods for MSFW's if all ages to explore career options. The Texas Rehabilitation Commission work adjustment/orientation classes are a preliminary model; however, additional development is required to increase the effectiveness of this type of service, to document the approaches which work best, and to standardize the curriculum, where appropriate.

#### Relevant Evaluation Standard

The evaluation standard relevant to this section is the following:

- 2.4 Farmworker service projects provide effective means for developing individual written rehabilitation plans (IWRP's) which take into account farmworkers' limited access to information about careers and occupations.

Improvement is needed in this area. The development of career awareness among handicapped MSFW's has not received the priority that outreach and other aspects of service have, although there is a foundation for continuing development.



**FINDING V-7: (DEVELOPMENT OF INDIVIDUAL WRITTEN REHABILITATION PLANS)** Younger MSFW's were more likely than older ones to have discussed career options with their counselors. Those clients who had considered a variety of career options in the course of plan development with their counselor were more likely to aspire to nonagricultural jobs and secure those jobs.

**RECOMMENDATION V-7:** RSA, and state VR agencies, should consider possible program and management incentives which would encourage counselors to explore carefully with clients a full range of career options in the course of developing individual rehabilitation plans. A system of "weighted" closures providing additional credit for nonagricultural rehabilitations is the recommended means of achieving this goal.

### Rehabilitation Plan Development

The development of individualized rehabilitation plans for clients is a key element in the rehabilitation process. The rehabilitation of MSFW's poses particularly difficult planning problems because a) farmworkers have few transferable job skills, b) because the labor market in rural areas is very weak and competition for scarce jobs is intense, and c) because participation in rehabilitation plans which involve substantive retraining requires a level of economic support which is generally not available to handicapped MSFW's. Section 312 projects have become experienced in putting together individual rehabilitation plans which use available community resources. However, there is little evidence that development of rehabilitation plans is truly individualized in many cases. Individual farmworker clients are presented with a limited menu of service options that the program can provide effectively. The objectives explored in the rehabilitation planning process are those which justify provision of one of the limited available services, what has been called the "cookie cutter" approach to rehabilitation.

E.H. White and Company asked clients whether they had talked over job possibilities with their counselor in the course of developing individual written rehabilitation plans (IWRP's). The question was stated, as follows, in order to emphasize the issue of exploring career options in rehabilitation:

Question 13B: "Part of the work of rehabilitation counselors is to counsel people about the kind of job possibilities available to them - to help people look at the kinds of things they would like to do, and to be realistic about the kinds of things it is possible to achieve...Did your counselor talk over different possibilities in figuring out a rehabilitation plan for you?"







Less than half of the respondents had talked over job possibilities with their counselor. Youth were most likely to have talked over job possibilities as part of their plan, while older clients were least likely to have talked about job options.

MSFW's saw plan development (as defined above) as an important aspect of counseling. 57% of those who had engaged in plan development including discussion of job possibilities felt that the counseling they had received was especially beneficial or outstanding, while only 30% of those who had not received this type of plan development were so positive toward counseling. Discussion of employment alternatives was also related to the job aspirations of clients and the types of jobs they moved into. Table V-9 summarizes the relation between plan development and job aspirations.

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TABLE V-8  
REHABILITATION PLAN DEVELOPMENT  
PLAN DEVELOPMENT INCLUDED DISCUSSION OF JOB OPTIONS

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<u>AGE GROUP</u>	<u>YES</u>		<u>NO</u>		<u>DON'T KNOW</u>	
19 OR LESS	14	74%	4	21%	1	5%
20-49	70	60%	38	32%	9	8%
50 OR MORE	15	33%	28	61%	3	6%
TOTALS	99	54%	70	39%	13	7%

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SOURCE: E.H. White and Company Survey, 1986, Q.13  
(Does not include 08 closures)

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TABLE V-9  
REHABILITATION PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND JOB ASPIRATIONS

	TOTAL WHO TALKED OVER OPTIONS WITH DEFINITE JOB GOAL	JOB ASPIRATIONS					
		FARMWORK		NONAGRICULTURE		PLAN NOT TO WORK	
YES	82	14	17%	59	74%	9	9%
NO	89	29	32%	35	39%	25	28%

SOURCE: E.H. White and Company Survey, 1986, Q.28

From the practitioners' perspective, the issue of individualizing services recedes, to a certain extent, because MSFW's career awareness is so limited and their vocational interests are not well-defined.

Counselors do not explore a wide range of rehabilitation options because there seem to be so few viable options. And, clients do not push for a full consideration of options because they are not well-trained as "consumers" and because they are, themselves, at a loss to see what course of action can help them.

#### The Constraints on Development of IWRP's

The constraints on possible rehabilitation plans are real and very serious. Clients' employment barriers include the following:

1. Educational Level Migrant and seasonal farmworkers' educational levels are not adequate for entry into the majority of nonagricultural occupations or into many courses of technical training.
2. Language Although virtually all occupations require fluency in English, over half of MSFW's are limited in English.
3. Work Experience Most MSFW's work experience has not allowed them to develop skills which are transferable to the nonagricultural workplace. Although some MSFW's have nonagricultural work experience, this experience is primarily in menial jobs which develop few marketable job skills.



4. Job Market Rural areas are characterized by having weak labor markets. Available jobs are secured through family connections or through possession of specific technical skills which are easily marketable. Where industrial relocations provide openings in "emerging occupations" (e.g. in electronic assembly, data processing for service industries), handicapped farmworkers' educational background and lack of work experience do not allow them to compete successfully for the new jobs which are created.
5. Age Older farmworkers lack the self-confidence to leave farmwork and may find it difficult to compete with younger applicants for scarce jobs once they have decided to leave farmwork.

Barriers 1-3 can be addressed effectively, with adequate resources; remedial education can be provided to MSFW's; ESL classes can develop English-language skills; OJT, work experience, or classroom vocational training can overcome these barriers. Barriers 4-5 are much more intractable requiring rural policy initiatives well beyond the scope of vocational rehabilitation agencies role. The problem in the Section 312 projects' approach to IWRP development is that the "bundle" of barriers to successful rehabilitation of farmworkers seems so formidable, that the entire range of options is not explored fully.

#### VR Philosophy as a Disincentive to Individualized IWRP's

An additional stumbling block in rehabilitation counselors' development of IWRP's for clients is the traditional doctrine that the rehabilitation process is most effective when clients are helped to transfer existing work skills to new occupations or to return to new jobs in their old occupation.

Since many of MSFW's work skills are not easily marketable, the conclusion drawn by many of the Section 312 project counselors is that the preferred outcome of the rehabilitation process is return to farmwork. In interviews and discussions with counseling staff, the evaluators were informed that most handicapped MSFW's really do want to return to farmwork. As we discuss later in connection with provision of physical restoration services, there is a sizeable clientele who quite straightforwardly wish physical restoration services which will allow them to return in farmwork. As can be seen from the above Table V-9 some farmworkers do wish to remain in farmwork even after exploring career alternatives. But some who do not wish to remain





in farmwork have come out of the rehabilitation process and found themselves in farmwork once again (as approximately 10% more MSFW's aspire to nonagricultural jobs than are placed in such jobs).

The appropriateness of sophisticated diagnostic procedures and vocational evaluation is questionable if the "treatment" plan or program intervention is simply one or two routine services.

Section 312 staff see the issue of appropriate rehabilitation plan objectives as a philosophical dilemma as to whether it is proper for projects to be "biased" toward retraining farmworkers into occupations outside of agriculture. In fact, the reiteration of this philosophical dilemma reveals that the doctrine of rehabilitation as a social investment, as the most cost-effective means to preserve "human resources", turns out to establish a subtle bias against retraining.

Why is this? We believe the answer is not a philosophical one, but one having to do with financing retraining. As can be seen from the list of employment barriers facing MSFW's, achievement of occupational goals outside of farmwork are likely to require significant investments of a client's time and similar financial investment from the vocational rehabilitation agency. Counselors' concerns are that clients' motivation may not be adequate to justify the lengthy investment of time and energy required to be successfully retrained. MSFW's, therefore, represent a high "risk" within the VR agencies' institutional value system.

While it might be argued that returning to farmwork is an improvement in the farmworkers' condition, this is not true in all cases. Returning to farmwork may increase the risk of re-injury; for others, who may avoid re-injury, their continuation in farmwork may involve steadily decreasing earning power. From a policy point of view, the maximization of short-term goals (status 26 closures) is at cross-purposes to maximization of the overall cost-benefit ratio of rehabilitation (which must be calculated on differences in earning potential over a workers' life).



However, it is not widely recognized that successful, low-risk models for MSFW retraining do exist, the best documented being the Center for Employment Training model.<sup>103</sup> This model provides services which include concurrent provision of skills training, remedial education, ESL (if needed) and supportive services. CET specializes in providing intensive training with the curriculum being designed in conjunction with private sector employers who hire in demand occupations. Occupations included in the training inventory change with labor market conditions but tend to be skilled jobs in growth industries. Participation is on an open entry/open exit basis. Length of participation in training depends on the occupation being taught; MSFW participation ranges from 7 months to 1 year.

The model is very effective. But as might be expected, the costs are high. Costs per successful placement range from \$5,000 to \$9,000.<sup>104</sup> However, the payback period is comparable to lower-cost investments as placements are at over \$2.00 per hour over the minimum wage levels typical of MSFW post-program employment.<sup>105</sup>

#### Relation to Evaluation Standards

Two of the evaluation standards are relevant to the Section 312 programs' development of rehabilitation plans. They are the following:

- 2.4 Farmworker service projects provide effective means for developing individual written rehabilitation plans (IWRP's) which take into account farmworkers' limited access to information about careers and occupations.
- 2.5 Farmworker service projects should provide farmworkers with a range of rehabilitation service options which take into account the special problems faced by farmworkers -- including a migratory lifestyle -- in achieving successful rehabilitation.

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<sup>103</sup> An extensive evaluation of CET effectiveness in serving low-income Latino youth under YEDPA was conducted by the author for Youthwork, Inc. in 1981. CET service to MSFW youth was evaluated at 5 sites: San Jose, Santa Maria, Portland, and Oxnard (Kissam, Murdock, and Porter 1979). Currently, the model is being evaluated by the Rockefeller Foundation.

<sup>104</sup> and <sup>105</sup> (footnotes on following page)



Section 312 projects are aware of the employability problems faced by farmworkers and take them into account in the development of IWRP's. In particular, projects have done a better job than has generally been recognized in establishing arrangements for interstate referrals of migrants.

However, in some respects, projects have overreacted in response to the serious problems faced by MSFW's by adopting a philosophy that not much can "really" be done to rehabilitate MSFW's other than to secure needed social services and/or return to farmwork. The result is a bias against the development of IWRP's with vocational objectives outside of farmwork, particularly for older farmworkers. External constraints (e.g., lack of bilingual vocational training, rural unemployment rates over 18%) pose genuine constraints on the types of IWRP which can be developed for MSFW clients. Internal factors which constrain the development of truly individualized IWRP's are a) general agency emphasis on cost-effectiveness, b) orders of selection based on severity of disability rather than severity of handicap, c) status 26 closures as key measures of performance.

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(footnotes from previous page)

104 Interview with Carlos Lopez, Training Division, CET/San Jose. Mr. Lopez points out that the most difficulties in training older MSFW's have to do with remediation, but that personal adjustment is easier for these workers than for younger participants. Peer group support is an important element of the training model and, to some degree, older and younger clients provide support to each other.

105 The mean weekly wage at closure for rehabilitated MSFW's as recorded in Section 312 project MIS systems is \$177 per week, or \$4.42 per hour (State MIS, 8 states).





**FINDING V-8: (COUNSELING)** One of the Section 312 program's strongest points was counseling. MSFW's interviewed felt that counselors were sympathetic and helpful in resolving their problems. The use of counseling assistants/outreach workers seemed especially effective as a strategy to provide cost-effective services.

**RECOMMENDATION V-8:** Because a strong capacity in counseling already exists, the use of peer training is an appropriate means to expand VR agencies' capacity to serve MSFW's. VR agencies should encourage such peer training at the state level and RSA should provide, via annual project conferences, opportunities for practitioners to exchange information on effective approaches. Recruitment for counseling staff in Section 312 projects should stress familiarity with MSFW communities more than educational background.

Counseling was identified as an outstanding or particularly beneficial service by 42% of the MSFW's interviewed. The MSFW's interviewed who were in applicant status were especially positive (in part, because they had received no other services) - nonetheless, 68% identified counselling as being particularly beneficial. This reflects, the significant investment of effort by counselors early in the rehabilitation process.

Even among the clients closed unsuccessfully, counseling was identified relatively often as being particularly useful; 24% of the unsuccessful clients consider the counseling beneficial.

The younger clients were most likely to identify counseling as being outstanding; a very high proportion of teenagers (65%) identified counseling as being outstanding.

The clients who had found some part of the rehabilitation process particularly frustrating or difficult found counselors very helpful. Among the clients who were in a rehabilitation plan, 40% said that the counselor had helped very much in resolving their problem. Among rehabilitated respondents, 57% of those who stated that they had problems felt that counselors had been very helpful in solving them.

Counselors understood farmworkers well and were sympathetic to the problems facing them. About a quarter of the counselors interviewed felt that the counseling services they provided to MSFW's were unique or innovative. Many others felt that their approaches to counseling were effective, but that



culturally sensitive counseling should be a matter of course. In the projects where counseling took place in a setting other than a one-to-one situation (e.g., in a job club or in an orientation group), the personal interactions in these groups were very positive.

A counseling priority was to maintain farmworkers' self-confidence that they could succeed, because clients rapidly became discouraged when they encountered difficulties in training or in finding a job. A primary objective was to insure that a client would follow through with an IWRP which had been begun. An important element of this counseling was to engage in values clarification in which counselors would talk over with clients the value of successful rehabilitation. Counseling was not an important element in cases where the primary service provided was physical restoration because in many of these cases, the client's contact with the counselor was quite limited once arrangements for securing the restoration services had been made.

The consensus among the counselors was that it was very difficult to provide counseling to older MSFW's (40 years and older) who generally would not believe that they could function in a work environment outside of farmwork. Career counseling efforts were oriented more toward younger MSFW's who were more personally flexible, more positive toward remedial education and vocational training, and more willing to change their lifestyle.

Counselors reported that the most difficult problem faced in counseling was to convince migrant farmworkers to consider alternatives to the migrant lifestyle. This task was most difficult in the projects where VR services were provided during the peak season for employment (winter in Florida, summer in Illinois). In these cases, migrant workers were very reluctant to participate in VR because they wished to work every available hour while there was work, although they might have serious work limitations.

Project counselors tended to emphasize the case management aspects of their jobs more than the counseling and guidance. Less than half felt that counseling was one of the most crucial services provided by the project. Counselors' time budgets also left little time for direct counseling with clients. Paper work involving case documentation, service authorization, or



coordination of services (including similar benefits) took a great proportion of counselors' time. In addition, travel time in the rural areas served by the Section 312 projects left less time for personal contact.

The staffing pattern in which a counselor was teamed with an outreach worker or counseling assistant provided projects a way to provide personal counseling while keeping on top of the paperwork. In these situations, the counseling assistant provided the bulk of counseling, while the counselor provided case management. The arrangement worked very well in the three projects where it was used; unfortunately, not all sites in each of these states had the counselor-assistant team. A similar situation where an outreach subcontractor provided translation and assistance to clients throughout the rehabilitation process did not work so well because there were strains in the relationship between the VR agency and the community outreach contractor.

None of the counselors interviewed felt that personal counseling for psychological problems fell within the scope of their duties, but because of the lack of mental health resources, some counseling interaction required support well beyond the that of normal vocational counseling. In part, this stemmed from the fact that most of the MSFW clients were experiencing a great deal of economic stress from being handicapped.

Counseling would very often involve entire families and most counselors felt that involving an entire family was important as a means to insure a client's success. Although 17% of MSFW's interviewed reported some type of family conflict involved in rehabilitation, only 10% of the family problems were described as serious. Table V-10 gives a breakdown of the kinds of problem experienced.







TABLE V-10  
MSFW'S EXPERIENCING FAMILY PROBLEMS/CONFLICT DURING REHABILITATION<sup>106</sup>

	CALIFORNIA		ILLINOIS		TEXAS		FLORIDA		TOTAL	
	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
TOTAL	59	100%	82	100%	77	100%	34	100%	252	100%
NO PROBLEM	42	71%	74	90%	61	81%	30	88%	206	82%
CHILD CARE	8	14%	6	7%	6	8%	4	12%	24	10%
FINANCIAL NEED	9	15%	3	4%	7	9%	3	9%	22	9%
HAD TO MOVE	--		2	2%	1	1%	1	3%	4	2%
SPOUSE	--		--		2	3%	--		2	1%

Source: E.H. White and Company survey, 1986, Question 17: "Many people find that there are sometimes conflicts between their own needs and their family's needs when they undertake something as difficult as rehabilitation. For example, having to move with their family, or having to take care of children or support them. Have you had that kind of problem?"

According to respondents, counselors were only able to resolve a small number of these (18% of the conflicts which did occur). Nonetheless, those who had experienced family conflicts were likely to go on to be rehabilitated successfully.<sup>107</sup> It is possible that counselors' efforts to secure family involvement may have successfully kept some types of family conflicts from arising.

<sup>106</sup> Includes seven families reporting multiple problems

<sup>107</sup> Seventy-eight percent of those who reported family conflicts were successfully rehabilitated. However, it was the 30-49 year old group which experienced the most family conflicts (because they are the age group with the most minor dependents). This is the group which is most likely to be successfully rehabilitated in any case.



According to counselors, particular problems arose in connection with provision of services to youth. Several counselors observed that the parents of handicapped youth would be overly protective, interfering with rehabilitation plans. In such cases, counselors would attempt to discuss the importance of career advancement for the younger generation. When successful, such sessions would lead to migrant families giving permission for a teenager to remain in the homebase area to continue in a training or educational program, an accomplishment which counselors were justly proud to have managed.

#### Relevant Evaluation Standards

Evaluation Standard 2.2, below, is relevant to counseling. The counseling in the Section 312 program is effective, in large measure, because the counseling staff can establish rapport with clients.

- 2.2 Farmworker service projects should provide means to serve clients which take into account individual language use and cultural mores.



**FINDING V-9: (Maintenance Assistance)** The primary maintenance support to handicapped MSFW's by the Section 312 projects was for transportation. Despite low income levels, only 20% of handicapped MSFW's were public assistance recipients, suggesting that financial hardship may adversely affect those clients whose rehabilitation plan requires multiple services over a long period of time.

**RECOMMENDATION V-9:** RSA should initiate discussions with other federal special programs serving MSFW's, via the Interagency Task Force, to determine if coordination efforts at the federal level might lessen the serious constraints faced by Section 312 projects at the local level in providing maintenance support to MSFW's.

Program-wide, 81% of MSFW's were not receiving any public assistance at all, although family incomes were very low: \$2,300 annually (based on state data on family income at referral).

There was a great deal of variation between states in the kinds of public assistance support MSFW families were receiving prior to participation in the program, in part due to variations in the type of caseload in each state and, in part, due to the effect of state policies on public assistance which make migrants' access to public assistance quite difficult. Despite the variations, it is clear that few of the handicapped MSFW's in any state had substantial resources to allow participation in extended rehabilitation programs. For handicapped MSFW's whose rehabilitation involves primarily physical restoration, maintenance is not a primary issue; but, for those whose rehabilitation plans might be expected to require a number of months, the question of maintenance becomes an important one.

Table V-11 gives a breakdown of the types of public assistance MSFW's or their families were receiving before entering into the Section 312 VR program.

Migrants were less likely than seasonal farmworkers to receive public assistance of any type other than for foodstamps. As others among the "working poor," migrants rely heavily on foodstamps. Table V-12 shows the different levels of public assistance support to migrant and seasonal farmworkers.





TABLE V-11  
TYPES OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE REPORTED BY MSFW'S BY STATE

	CALIFORNIA		ILLINOIS		TEXAS		FLORIDA		TOTAL	
	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
TOTAL	59	100%	82	100%	77	100%	36	100%	254	100%
SSDI	10	17%	1	4%	4	5%	3	8%	18	7%
AFDC	12	34%	5	6%	6	8%	2	5%	25	10%
FOODSTAMPS	1	2%	17	21%	23	30%	5	14%	46	18%
SSI	7	12%	2	2%	18	23%	3	8%	30	12%
UI	3	5%	--		1	1%	--		4	2%
STATE DIS.	9	12%	--		--		--		9	4%

Source: E.H. White and Company survey, 1986, Q.18.

TABLE V-12  
TYPES OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE REPORTED  
BY MIGRANT OR SEASONAL STATUS

	MIGRANTS		SEASONALS		TOTALS	
	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
TOTALS	91	100%	159	100%	253	100%
SSDI	2	2%	15	9%	17	7%
AFDC	8	8%	17	11%	25	10%
FOODSTAMPS	31	34%	15	9%	46	18%
SSI	8	9%	20	12%	27	11%
UI	1	1%	3	2%	4	1%
STATE DIS.	--		9	7%	9	4%

Source: E.H. White and Company survey, 1986, Q. 18,  
Crosstabulated by migrant status.



Financial support is a critical element in an effective service plan, particularly for MSFW's with children to support. Nineteen percent of the handicapped MSFW's with more than one dependent (i.e., heads of households with children or dependents other than a spouse) relied on current earning as their primary source of support at referral. Forty two percent relied on family and friends for their support. Only 22% had financial assistance from any public program (including Workers' Compensation and SSDI).

Financial hardship was a major factor affecting 61% of MSFW's heads of household who had been working at referral or relying on family and friends for support. Those who were working did so in order to provide for their families. Those who relied on family or friends for support were burdening another wage earner who was also likely to be living in poverty.

According to staff interviews, despite the efforts by VR agency staff to secure financial support for clients, many clients "fell through the cracks". Migrants, in particular, find it difficult to qualify for public assistance; families with older children may not be eligible for AFDC. Despite vigorous efforts to secure benefits for general financial support for handicapped farmworkers and their families, the resources often were not available.

There is currently no federal program targeted to MSFW's which provides income support. Farmworker organizations are able to provide emergency housing and food but assistance is on a onetime only basis. Even among those workers covered by state disability insurance, benefits are likely to be exhausted even though the recipient may not qualify for SSDI support.

Based on our interviews, the situation of older men who were seriously handicapped but who were not eligible for SSI was the most desperate. Typical of this group was an older man with serious orthopedic impairment of his back who worked as an irrigator; he continued to "work". With the help of his wife and children he continued to move long sections of irrigation pipe, with the family group struggling as best they could to move the 60-80 pound. sections of pipe. At the time of our interview he had not told his employer that he couldn't move the pipe any more; he was afraid he could never find a job again if it became known in the small community that he wasn't "fit" to work.



## Maintenance Support from the Section 312 Program

Section 312 of the Rehabilitation Act authorizes maintenance payments to farmworker clients and their families to allow them to participate in rehabilitation activities. However, it also requires that payments to MSFW's be consistent with payments to other clients of the state VR agency. Consequently, Section 312 projects only provide MSFW's with the same maintenance support as other clients. This generally consisted of support for transportation connected with the rehabilitation process. Maintenance support for expenses incurred in travel outside the area (most commonly for medical evaluation or physical restoration) were also provided.

MFSW's were asked if transportation was a problem for them. The frequency of reported transportation problems was somewhat lower than expected, but counselors were quite effective in solving those problems which did arise. Table V-13 provides an overview of transportation problems experienced by clients and support from the Section 312 projects in resolving those problems.

Counselors were able to solve the transportation problems of 44% of respondents who reported experiencing some sort of transportation problem. The other transportation problems were not solved.





TABLE V-13  
FREQUENCY AND SEVERITY OF TRANSPORTATION PROBLEMS

	CALIFORNIA		ILLINOIS		TEXAS		FLORIDA		TOTAL	
	<u>N</u>	<u>(%)</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>(%)</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>(%)</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>(%)</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>(%)</u>
NO PROBLEMS	43	75%	66	80%	57	78%	26	76%	192	77%
TOTAL WITH SOME PROBLEM	14	25%	16	20%	18	22%	8	24%	56	23%
<u>SEVERITY OF PROBLEM:</u> NUMBER AND PROPORTION OF THOSE WITH SOME PROBLEM										
VERY SERIOUS	7	50%	11	69%	3	16%	2	25%	23	41%
SERIOUS BUT MANAGEABLE	4	29%	2	12%	8	44%	4	50%	18	32%
CONSTANT INCONVENIENCE	2	14%	1	6%	--	'	1	12%	4	7%
OCCASIONAL	1	7%	2	12%	7	39%	2	25%	12	21%

SOURCE: E.H. White and Company survey, 1986, Q.16



## Relevant Evaluation Standards

The relevant evaluation standard is Standard 2.5 which relates to the Section 312 project's success in addressing the special problems faced by farmworkers, including a migratory lifestyle.

Section 312 projects have attempted to provide handicapped MSFW's with maintenance support to assist in their rehabilitation plans but with little success in accomplishing this objective because of the lack of resources. Less than 10% of clients reported being helped to secure public assistance by the Section 312 project .<sup>108</sup>

The lack of public transportation in rural areas is a problem which could not be entirely overcome by the Section 312 projects. Transportation support consisted primarily of reimbursements to friends, family, or to clients themselves. In only one state, Florida, did the Section 312 project have a van to provide transportation. The availability of the van was felt by staff to be an important element in the program's success.

The legislative requirement that support to MSFW's be consistent with support to other clients seems to preclude additional help to support MSFW's in completing rehabilitation plans, unless state VR agencies were to change their overall policies regarding maintenance support.

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<sup>108</sup> E.H. White and Company survey, 1986, Q. 19. The numbers of MSFW's who the projects helped receive public assistance are too small to determine whether this assistance was a significant factor in achieving rehabilitation success. Those who were helped do include both clients receiving services and those who were not accepted for VR services.



FINDING V-10: Section 312 projects provided much higher levels of physical restoration services than of training services to handicapped MSFW's. Most restoration services involved substantial cost. Older clients, clients with a primary school education, and Spanish speaking clients were more likely to receive restoration services, while younger English-speaking clients with higher levels of education received the bulk of training services. Rehabilitation rates among the two groups of clients, those receiving training and those receiving physical restoration were similar. Attention is required to afford all MSFW clients equal access to training services.

#### TRAINING

RECOMMENDATION V-10A: RSA should explore the possibility of interagency initiatives at the federal level to develop appropriate training resources to serve handicapped farmworkers. Particular attention should be given to developing joint initiatives with the Department of Labor, as JTPA Section 402 employment training organizations provide a valuable resource for training MSFW's with limited-English and low educational levels.

RECOMMENDATION V-10B: At the local level, state VR agencies should give top priority to developing appropriate training resources to provide handicapped MSFW's with vocational training. Strategies should include the development of long-term arrangements to purchase vocational training services tailored to the special needs of MSFW's.

RECOMMENDATION V-10C: Establishment of a "weighted closure" system of management incentives should be designed to encourage delivery of vocational training or other services (such as pre-employment/job search classes) designed, in particular, to assure clients with low educational levels or limited English access to stable employment.

#### PHYSICAL RESTORATION

RECOMMENDATION V-10D: RSA should, at the federal level, explore the possibility of interagency initiatives to improve MSFW access to physical restoration assistance, especially surgical procedures. Particular attention should be given to developing joint initiatives with the Migrant Health Program.

The MIS data collected by E.H. White and Company provides a "snapshot" of Section 312 grantees' services to clients, the status of all in-plan cases on the sampling date. Table V-14 presents this data.





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TABLE V-14  
STATUS OF IN-PLAN CASES

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<u>STATUS</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>PERCENT</u>
Counseling/Guidance Only	55	9%
Physical Restoration	110	17%
Training	263	41%
Ready for Work	80	13%
In a Job	76	12%
Service Interrupted	53	8%
TOTAL	637	100%

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Source: State MIS data for 8 states (weighted), 1986.

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Since the length of time in a given status varies, the "snapshot" is more likely to catch clients who are in training than in physical restoration, because physical restoration may often lead to fairly rapid rehabilitation.

As can be seen from Table V-14, the open cases include a significant number of clients who are already employed, and ones whose service is interrupted. Most of those who are employed are likely to remain employed, but those who are in a "service interrupted" status are likely to be lost since this category includes migration as well as other interruptions.

E.H. White and Company asked clients in the four survey states the type of services they had received from the Section 312 project. Table V-15 provides a breakdown of the proportion who received training or physical restoration, the two major categories of program intervention received after initiation of a rehabilitation plan. Receipt of services is listed both for those clients currently in plan and those who were closed from a plan status, either successfully (status 26) or unsuccessfully (status 28).



Placement and post-placement assistance are reviewed separately in the following section.

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TABLE V-15  
RECEIPT OF TRAINING AND PHYSICAL RESTORATION SERVICES BY STATUS  
SURVEY STATES

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	<u>TOTAL</u>		<u>RESTORATION</u>		<u>TRAINING</u>	
IN PLAN CASES	74	100%	32	43%	14	19%
REHABILITATED	47	100%	22	47%	8	17%
NOT REHABILITATED	15	100%	7	47%	1	7%

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SOURCE: E.H. White and Company survey, 1986, Q.13  
Crosstabulation by Status.

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As can be seen from the above Table V-15 , clients were twice as likely to receive physical restoration as training, but as likely to become rehabilitated from either type of service. However, as is discussed later, the demographics of the groups who receive training and those who receive restoration services are quite different.

### Training

The training issue is crucial to consideration of Section 312 projects' service to MSFW's since this is an area where farmworkers' cultural differences (language, educational level, and career outlook) require special service initiatives.

Training includes a variety of training services and participation in remedial programs.



## OJT

On the job training (OJT) is favored by counseling staff because it is, in essence, a job placement. Also, hands-on learning is very attractive to most MSFW's, many of whom feel less at ease in a classroom setting. OJT is also highly favored because language problems make standard vocational classes in community college or trade school settings inaccessible to Spanish-speaking MSFW's. The constraints on use of OJT is that the salary offset provided by a typical OJT contract is not attractive to most large employers. For them, the overhead cost of training (primarily lost productivity) does not justify the cost savings. While OJT is attractive to smaller employers, they provide a less stable work and training environment and counselors must use a good deal of discretion in placements. In rural communities, vocational rehabilitation agencies must also compete with other employment-oriented programs for OJT slots, a problem mentioned by counselors in most states. Despite the competition, in many areas, the existence of a JTPA program allowed the vocational rehabilitation agency to secure OJT support as a similar benefit for some clients.

## Vocational Training

The availability of appropriate resources for vocational training varies greatly from community to community, even within the same state or region. Strategies used by Section 312 projects to secure training for MSFW clients was somewhat different in each local office; these strategies are discussed in more depth in case studies on the different state projects. The generalization that can be made is that Section 312 projects were highly adaptable and made good use of the available resources. These resources were, however, inadequate to meet the special needs of MSFW's and, in no case were there major initiatives to develop an adequate infrastructure to meet the educational and training needs of MSFW's.

In communities where a farmworker organization operated a vocational training program (typically under JTPA, Section 402 funding), this was the preferred source for skills training. In California, three of four project sites had access to bilingual vocational skills training provided by a JTPA





Section 402 grantee -- The Center for Employment Training. Two of the Idaho sites had access to the same program. In Texas, although a JTPA Section 402 grantee operated a skills training facility in the state, it was not in the Rio Grande Valley.

Community colleges provided an important vocational training resource where they were available; however, their curricula were not adapted to the special educational needs of MSFW's. For the clients who were able to cope with the academic curriculum, the technical schools were reported to be very useful. But it was estimated that only about 10% of the clients (generally, younger English-speaking MSFW dependents with some high school education) could benefit from training in the community college setting.

County or state-operated technical schools were available in some areas, but had the same drawbacks as other classroom training curricula for MSFW's. The Utah project also had enrolled a substantial number of clients in technical training courses (available in the Salt Lake City area). In the Florida site, where the clients are predominantly English-speaking, a local technical school was a resource with a surprising diversity of occupational training.

#### Remedial Education

Two types of remedial educational programs are important to serving MSFW's: adult basic education (often referred to as GED training) and English as a Second Language classes (ESL). Both types of educational program were available in most areas with high concentrations of Spanish-speaking MSFW's, generally as night classes. Counselors reported that client experience in these programs was not usually satisfactory. The key problem in involving adult MSFW's in ESL and GED training is that farmworkers do not perceive the educational program to be related to getting a job. In addition, the experience of having to be "back in school" was embarrassing and stressful for many MSFW's. This issue has been examined in some detail in connection with the general issue of vocational training for language minorities; the preferred solution is to provide remedial, language, and vocational training concurrently, ideally in a bilingual setting. The Center for Employment



Training service model is a highly appropriate one which features bilingual vocational training in a simulated industrial environment, together with extensive counseling and placement support. The model has been extensively evaluated and is highly successful. It is, however, relatively expensive to establish and was available in only 4 of the 38 sites where the Section 312 projects are operating.

#### Work Adjustment, Pre-Employment or Job Search Training

Also included in the training category are training workshops variously referred to as work adjustment, pre-employment, or job search training. Among the survey states where clients were interviewed, this took several forms: the work adjustment classes in Texas, a one- or two-week training workshop providing clients with information on new careers, exploring personal values and attitudes about work, and developing job search strategies. In California, this type of training was provided by a job club model which, however, was only used extensively in one of the four areas surveyed.

#### Types of Training Received

Training included both work adjustment/career awareness classes and vocational training providing participants with job related skills. Although the numbers of participants surveyed who had participated in training was small (23 respondents), 85% of the closed cases who had participated in training were rehabilitated. Most were satisfied with training although skills training was more popular than the work adjustment/career awareness classes.

Because of the constraints on training resources, subpopulations in the MSFW community did not participate at similar rates in training. In states where data on clients' primary language is available, there was a significant difference in participation of Spanish- and English-speaking clients. Only 41% of in-plan Spanish-speaking clients were in training, while 63% of English-speaking clients were in training.



Education was also an important determinant of participation in training. Table V-16 gives an overview of participation in training by education.

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TABLE V-16  
PARTICIPATION IN TRAINING BY EDUCATIONAL LEVEL<sup>109</sup>

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<u>EDUCATIONAL LEVEL</u>	<u>NUMBER IN TRAINING</u>	<u>PERCENT OF IN-PLAN CASES</u>
0 - 6	59	24.6%
6 - 11	74	46.0%
H.S. Grad +	106	56.0%

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Source: State MIS Data, 1986

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Not only are younger clients more likely to get training than older clients; the clients with higher educational levels in each age cohort were more likely to receive training than their less-educated counterparts. Table V-17 demonstrates the relation of age and education on participation in training.

As can be seen from Table V-17, education is a determinant of participation in training for all age groups, but that the group of 30-39 year olds are least affected by lack of education in their access to training. The lowest overall rate of participation in training is among the clients over 40 years of age, in part because this group is more likely to be in physical restoration status. The overall pattern of participation in training is very striking with the highest training participation among 20-29 year olds with at least a 9th grade education (57%) and the lowest among clients over 40 with less than a 9th grade education (17%).

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<sup>109</sup> Data on educational level is missing for 24 cases, most of whom are mentally retarded clients, where EDLEVEL was not coded in state MIS systems.





TABLE V-17  
PARTICIPATION IN TRAINING BY AGE AND EDUCATIONAL LEVEL<sup>110</sup>

<u>AGE/EDUCATION OF CLIENTS</u>	<u>TOTAL IN-PLAN</u>	<u>TOTAL IN TRAINING</u>	<u>IN TRAINING % OF IN-PLAN</u>
ALL AGES	584	230	39%
19 YRS OR LESS	43	21	49%
LESS THAN 9TH GRADE	1	0	0%
9TH GRADE OR MORE	42	21	49%
20 TO 29 YEARS OF AGE	169	89	52%
LESS THAN 9TH GRADE	29	9	31%
9TH GRADE OR MORE	140	80	57%
30 TO 39 YEARS OF AGE	153	68	44%
LESS THAN 9TH GRADE	62	24	37%
9TH GRADE OR MORE	91	44	48%
40 YEARS OF AGE AND OLDER	219	52	23%
LESS THAN 9TH GRADE	154	26	17%
9TH GRADE OR MORE	65	26	40%

Source: State MIS data, for 8 states, 1986.

<sup>110</sup> Numbers in Tables V-16 and V-17 do not agree because clients for whom data on age or education is missing have been dropped from the cross-tabulation.



## Physical Restoration

Physical restoration is a service where the most important factor is the specific medical evaluation and type of disability of the client. There were, however, distinct patterns. Proportion of clients in physical restoration status rises slowly from 5.6% among teenagers in plan status to 34.6% among clients over 50 years of age. Also, as might be expected, doctors provided the largest single source of referrals for clients receiving physical restoration.

Clients with visual or "other" disabilities were most likely to be receiving physical restoration. They make up 60% of the physical restorations, although they are only 40% of the total caseload. The other disabilities receiving physical restoration services include a large number of hernias and hysterectomies. The visual disabilities include both major service, (e.g. laser treatment of diabetic retinopathy) and minor services (e.g, provision of eyeglasses). Although clients with orthopedic/functional disabilities are less likely than other clients to receive physical restoration, they still make up 30% of the restorative services.

Based on clients' descriptions of services, E.H. White and Company categorized physical restoration as "major" (estimated cost over \$200) or as "minor" (e.g. purchase of eyeglasses). Table V-18 gives a breakdown of the level of physical restoration services received by clients.



TABLE V-18  
LEVEL OF PHYSICAL RESTORATION SERVICES -- SURVEY STATES<sup>111</sup>

STATUS	LEVEL OF SERVICE				CAN'T TELL VALUE		TOTAL
	MAJOR (> \$200)		MINOR (< \$200)				
IN-PLAN	23	67%	6	18%	5	15%	34
REHABILITATED	19	86%	2	9%	1	5%	22
NOT REHABILITATED	4	57%	1	14%	2	29%	7
TOTAL	46	73%	9	14%	8	13%	63

Source: E.H. White and Company survey, 1986, Q.13.

#### State by State Variations in Receipt of Service

There is a very large variation from state to state in the proportion of in-plan cases receiving physical restoration. Table V-19 presents a rank order of projects by relative provision of physical restoration as a service, together with proportion of clients in training. As can be seen in the following table, states with high proportions of clients in physical restoration usually have low proportions of clients in training and vice versa, since these are the two major service typologies. However, total numbers in training and physical restoration vary slightly because of variations in other open statuses (counseling, job-ready, and employed).

<sup>111</sup> Data are missing for 23 respondents who received physical restoration but who did not provide information on what type of treatment the physical restoration involved.





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TABLE V-19  
SECTION 312 PROJECTS' PROVISION OF SERVICES  
PHYSICAL RESTORATION VS. TRAINING  
IN PLAN CASES

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<u>STATE</u>	<u>% PHYSICAL RESTORATION</u>	<u>% TRAINING</u>
Illinois	80%	7%
Florida	53%	23%
Texas (Blind)	50%	16%
Colorado	48%	15%
Texas (General) <sup>112</sup>	20%	17%
Idaho	10%	57%
Utah	6%	48%
New York	5%	61%
California	2%	60%
Washington	--	--
Virginia <sup>113</sup>	--	--

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SOURCE: State MIS Data on in-plan cases, 11 states, 1986.

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While variations in provision of training service are understandable because of lack of appropriate training facilities in different areas, the extreme variation in levels of physical restoration provided seem to involve varying patterns of rehabilitation philosophy and specialized techniques for service delivery which vary from state to state, depending on agency philosophy.

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<sup>112</sup> The Texas Rehabilitation Commission's use of physical restoration is higher than this would suggest because the TRC program has a large pool of "ready for work" clients, most of whom received physical restoration assistance. We estimate that Texas' actual use of physical restoration is in the 40-50% range.

<sup>113</sup> The Virginia Department of Rehabilitation's MIS data did not include information on open cases. However, staff interviews suggest that a good deal of service may involve physical restoration.



Agencies' ability to provide physical restoration services was markedly superior in the homebase states in the E.H. White and Company study. This stems, in part, from migrant farmworkers' adaption to their mobile lifestyle. They are more likely to seek out social services of all kinds in their home area than "upstream." In addition, the health care delivery networks are better in the downstream states than in the upstream states. Both the Florida project and the Texas projects had built networks to secure physical restoration services in a routine and timely fashion. While all the Section 312 projects have given priority to "fast-tracking" for migrants, it is still difficult to schedule medical services rapidly enough to conform to migrants' upstream schedules. This area is one which suggests itself strongly as one where interstate coordination would be extremely valuable. The Texas Rehabilitation Commission has developed exemplary approaches to securing cost-efficient physical restoration in a number of communities. This involves tailoring agreements to match rehabilitation agency purchase of case services with hospital contributions of services to medical indigents under the Hill-Burton requirements.

#### Relevant Evaluation Standard

- 2.5 Farmworker service projects should provide farmworkers with a range of rehabilitation service options which take into account the special problems faced by farmworkers -- including a migratory lifestyle -- in achieving successful rehabilitation.



FINDING V-11: 19% of MSFW's in plan status or closed rehabilitated reported receiving placement assistance. Another 8% reported receiving post-placement services. While many MSFW's remain in agriculture after rehabilitation, others move into available nonagricultural jobs.

RECOMMENDATION V-11: State VR agencies should provide increased attention to providing MSFW's who seek nonagricultural employment with improved placement services. Efforts to improve placement should be closely linked to local labor market research (ideally involving private sector employers in an advisory role) regarding available jobs and skills demands. Increased attention to placement would be most effective if it is coupled with concurrent efforts to provide appropriate vocational training in demand occupations when necessary. Job club and career awareness/work adjustment models developed by the California Department of Rehabilitation and the Texas Rehabilitation Commission are promising efforts in this direction and should be further developed.

Rehabilitated MSFW's occupations at case closure are clustered in occupational/industrial categories which predominate in rural labor markets. Table V-20 presents a breakdown of the occupations of successfully rehabilitated MSFW's at closure as recorded in state MIS systems.

The nonagricultural occupations into which farmworkers are placed are often those where they have worked before to supplement their farmwork income. These jobs characteristically require few educational competencies, but do require familiarity with specialized procedures. Access to many of these jobs is via an informal network, rather than through formal application, screening, and testing procedures, making them easier for farmworkers to secure.

The most promising jobs secured by farmworkers in rural labor markets are probably in the skilled service occupations (e.g., bookkeepers, equipment mechanics, fork lift operators/material handling). There is high demand for qualified workers in certain of these areas and they provide good career ladders for MSFW's who can secure an entry level position. A small proportion of the occupations have the possibility of significant upward career mobility with either no additional training or in-service training. The remaining occupations are characterized by periodic layoffs and few opportunities for career advancement (e.g., domestic, janitorial, construction, auto mechanic/auto body and restaurant work). MSFW's preparation for these jobs have generally been in the underground (shadow) economy working for/with friends and neighbors: many will return to underground economy activities in this area when they become unemployed from "regular" jobs in the primary labor market.





TABLE V-20  
OCCUPATION AT CLOSURE

INDUSTRY/OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY	# OF CLIENTS	% OF CLIENTS
<b>Agriculture</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>33%</b>
Supervisors/Managers	6	3%
Skilled labor (eq. operator/specialist)	9	5%
Harvesting/general labor	30	15%
Packing/Canning	13	6%
Farmwork-related (e.g. landscaping)	7	4%
<b>Service</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>38%</b>
Automotive mechanic/body	18	9%
Clerical	14	7%
Other	4	2%
Domestic, restaurant, sales	20	10%
Janitorial, cleanup	19	10%
<b>Other</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>30%</b>
Light Manufacturing	10	5%
Construction, Maintenance	15	8%
Other-Miscellaneous	18	9%
Other-Homemakers	17	8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: State MIS data for California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, and Virginia. Washington has no closed cases. The distribution of occupations is somewhat different from the occupations listed in Table IV-7 by survey respondents interviewed by E.H. White and Company because the interview included Texas for which MIS data on occupation at closure was not provided. In addition, the questionnaire asked respondents about their first job "after leaving the program" which may include more farmwork than jobs at case closure (after 60 days employment).



Job development, placement, and post-placement activities were very informal in most Section 312 projects, partially in response to the nature of rural labor markets. In the smallest communities, counselors' informal networks of acquaintances, business contacts, and friends, are likely to have provided the most effective approach to job development. In larger communities, formal labor market research and medium-range planning is required to maximize job development/placement efforts. The personal networks of MSFW's who returned to farmwork were probably more valuable than VR counselors' efforts as access to farmwork is generally via such rapidly changing word-of-mouth information sources.

Approximately one-fifth of respondents (19%) in either plan status or rehabilitated (excluding applicants, unsuccessful closures, and those not accepted for service) reported receiving assistance in placement.<sup>114</sup> Of the 23 respondents who reported receiving placement assistance, 83% felt that it was adequate and needed no improvement. However, another 14 respondents who had not received placement assistance felt that the VR agency's placement services needed to be improved<sup>115</sup> (i.e., the respondents would have like to receive placement assistance).

The standard approach to coordinated service delivery is for the state employment service to provide placement assistance; however the Section 312 project VR counselors did not always feel that the employment service was a useful resource for placement assistance. This is because the more rural offices of the employment service specialize in recruitment and placement of agricultural employees and may not be able to assist in nonagricultural placements.

The outcome of the 1978 "Judge Richie" decision against the employment service for discrimination in provision of services to MSFW's was to establish

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<sup>114</sup> Source: E.H. White and Company survey, Question 13. The basis for reporting receipt of placement services includes both in-plan cases and closed rehabilitated cases since clients in status 20 (job-ready) or status 22 (employed) are appropriate recipients of placement services.

<sup>115</sup> CWRONG crosstabulated by CPLACE.



the National Monitor Advocate's office within the Employment Service. The Advocate's office establishes yearly performance standards for ES offices in significant MSFW areas. Eight of the ten states which are Section 312 grantees have performance standards for placing MSFW's in nonagricultural occupations established by the National Monitor Advocate Employment Service; the average performance standard for nonagricultural placements is 5.8% of total MSFW placements.<sup>116</sup>

The approach taken by Section 312 projects is to return MSFW's to a second tier of employment in labor markets characterized by high unemployment, little occupational diversity, and great seasonality. But this approach can be criticized, both on the grounds that it is inequitable (MSFW's remain in low-paying dead-end jobs), and that it is not cost-effective (net benefits are minimal) because clients experience periodic unemployment, and receive minimum or sub-minimum wages. Such placements are inevitable, however, unless there is an adequate investment to provide the remedial education, counseling, and vocational training to allow access to occupations with career mobility.

Even within the constraints of inadequate levels of spending and inadequate infrastructure for retraining, there is room for improvement in Section 312 projects' placement efforts. Counselors' time budgets did not allow adequate time for job development in offices where a single counselor was responsible for service to MSFW's. Job development/placement efforts ranked behind case documentation, outreach, and counseling, in time spent on them with the average counselor spending less than 20% of their time on job development/placement efforts. In offices where a rehabilitation team was functioning, job development and placement efforts were more extensive.

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<sup>116</sup> The ES performance standards provide a valuable benchmark for relatively difficulty in placing MSFW's into nonagricultural occupations, with higher performance standards reflecting greater success in achieving this goal in "significant" offices (those with greater than 10% MSFW's served). The standards are the following in decreasing order: New York (9.7%), Texas (9.4%), Illinois (7.9%), Florida (6.3%), California (6%), Colorado (6%), Virginia (5.5%), Washington (4.0%). Interview with Mr. Gil Apodaca, Employment Service, U.S. Department of Labor, October 25, 1986.





Among the Section 312 projects there were two promising approaches to job placement: the job clubs established in California and the orientation/work adjustment classes provided in Texas. Both are discussed in connection with counseling services since they include both personal development and counseling support as well as placement assistance. Both efforts result, in part, from agency-wide efforts to improve rehabilitation efforts. In both cases the service delivery model developed for the general population was successfully adapted for MSFW's.

Counselors in Section 312 projects did not stress post-placement services. However, clients would often return to counselors to request additional assistance if they became unemployed again. Of the survey respondents in plan status or rehabilitated, 8% had received post-placement assistance.

#### Relevant Evaluation Standard

- 2.5 Farmworker service projects should provide farmworkers with a range of rehabilitation service options which take into account the special problems faced by farmworkers -- including a migratory lifestyle -- in achieving successful rehabilitation.



## SECTION VI: CAPACITY-BUILDING IMPACT OF SECTION 312 FUNDING

### Introduction

In this Section we discuss the organizational impact of Section 312 funding on state VR agencies. This funding has been intended to develop or expand state capabilities in serving MSFW's, as well as to support direct service to handicapped migrant and seasonal farmworkers.

**FINDING VI-1:** Section 312 funding has expanded state VR agencies' capability to serve MSFW's in non-project offices as well as in project offices, but there is not adequate data to determine the exact level of service in non-project areas.

**RECOMMENDATION VI-1A:** RSA should require state VR agencies to address service to MSFW's as an element in their submission of the State Plans required by 34 CFR, Section 361. State Plans should address service to MSFW's in each office catchment area with an estimated MSFW population over 5,000 persons.

**RECOMMENDATION VI-1B:** RSA should consider including an "MSFW" datafield in the R-911 reporting form for the "major" agricultural states (the top 23), if improved information on levels of national service to MSFW's is desired.

Over the past decade, Section 312 support has dramatically increased state vocational rehabilitation agencies' ability to serve farmworkers. Levels of service have increased from less than 300 MSFW's per year in 1975 to over 2,500 clients per year served by Section 312 projects in 1986. Section 312 grants have also increased service to MSFW's in areas which are not currently served by Section 312 projects. These areas include non-project areas of Section 312 grantees and those states which were previously funded but which do not currently receive Section 312 funds.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> The RSA-300, and subsequently, the RSA 911 reporting system do not require states to collect information on all MSFW's who have received VR services. What is reported is only service by a "special program", namely the Section 312 project in the state. Therefore, there is no national data on services to MSFW's. In the one state, California, where data on service to MSFW's outside of project areas was available, service to MSFW's in non project areas added 50% to the total numbers of MSFW's served, "Production Statistics for the Farm Labor Project, Fiscal Year 1985-86", California Department of Rehabilitation



Although it is not possible to determine, the exact levels of service provided outside project areas, at least another 600 MSFW's are being served by Section 312 grantees outside of project areas.<sup>118</sup>

A strong service delivery system is in place in many Section 312 project areas. In several of the important farmworker states, vocational rehabilitation agency offices which were, in the past, supported by Section 312 funding, continue to provide regular service to MSFW's. In Idaho, service to MSFW's has been incorporated into the services of offices in all major agricultural areas.

In Texas, California, Colorado, Illinois, and Washington, there are substantial levels of service outside of Section 312 project areas. Utah, Virginia, and New York have Section 312 projects which provide substantial levels of service to MSFW's, but there has been little impact on the overall capacity of the state vocational rehabilitation agency. The only state where Section 312 has not resulted in successful capacity-building is Florida, where the Section 312 project has remained an isolated effort in a single office.

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<sup>118</sup> California is serving over 350 MSFW's per year in non-project offices. Colorado, Illinois, and Texas are each estimated to be serving over 100 MSFW's in non-project offices, based on interviews with Project Directors





FINDING VI-2: State VR agencies have been highly responsive to the needs of handicapped MSFW's by staffing Section 312 offices with bilingual/bicultural counseling staff, including staff with backgrounds as migrant or seasonal farmworkers in several offices.

RECOMMENDATION VI-2: State VR agencies should insure that each Section 312 office have bilingual/bicultural staff counseling staff who can establish rapport with handicapped MSFW's in the service area. Special attention should be given to utilization of paraprofessionals. State VR agencies should also review job requirements for Section 312 counseling staff to insure that required job qualifications are performance-related and that job descriptions include special duties such as outreach involved in service to MSFW's.

State vocational rehabilitation agencies' successes in staffing the Section 312 projects have been very impressive. Local office staff is generally bilingual and bicultural and are able to deal with farmworkers with sensitivity and understanding. Staff ethnicity reflected the ethnic composition of the MSFW population in all 37 offices where the Section 312 program provided substantial service to MSFW's (greater than five MSFW clients).

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TABLE VI-1  
ETHNICITY OF SECTION 312 COUNSELING STAFF

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<u>STATE</u>	<u>COUNSELING STAFF ETHNICITY</u>	<u>MSFW'S PREDOMINANT ETHNICITY</u>
California	100% Hispanic	Hispanic
Colorado	100% Hispanic	Hispanic
Florida	100% Black	Black, Hispanic
Idaho	80% Hispanic	Hispanic
Illinois	100% Hispanic	Hispanic
New York	50% Hispanic	Hispanic, Black
Texas (TRC)	60% Hispanic	Hispanic
Texas (TCB)	50% Hispanic	Hispanic
Utah	25% Hispanic	Hispanic
Virginia	95% White	Black, Hispanic (E.Shore)
Washington	100% Hispanic	Hispanic

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Bilingual counseling staff were available in 30 of the 32 offices where the MSFW population had a large proportion of clients whose primary language was not English.



Several of the projects (California, Florida, New York) used paraprofessional service providers with special facility in relating to the MSFW community for key tasks in providing VR service to farmworkers. This is an extremely promising strategy providing quality service with lowered staffing costs. Counseling staff had generally been recruited on the basis of their ability to relate well to farmworkers and provide effective social service delivery. Most did not have educational backgrounds in vocational rehabilitation. Most had, instead, extensive experience in social service, employment, or education programs serving MSFW's. The predominant type of staff training provided was in-service training supplemented with seminars in special topics in rehabilitation. About 30% of the Section 312 project staff are, themselves, from farmworker backgrounds.

However, civil service and/or union contract stipulations posed potential difficulties for future hiring of staff qualified to provide service to MSFW's. In Illinois, it was not possible to require counselors work outside regular working hours, although such work is required for effective service to MSFW's. In New York, Virginia, and Florida, job descriptions did not require counselors working in predominantly Spanish-speaking MSFW communities to speak Spanish. However, in other states, such as California, bilingualism was a required job qualification where appropriate.

Since there is a good deal of turnover in vocational rehabilitation, the Section 312 projects have been a means by which many minority counselors have entered the field of vocational rehabilitation. This is an important, if indirect, capacity-building effect. In only isolated instances, staff were not fluent in appropriate MSFW languages.



**FINDING VI-3:** Replication of the service delivery model in previously unserved areas requires a significant expenditure of effort and office productivity is significantly lower than in established offices during the initial period of expansion.

**RECOMMENDATION VI-3:** RSA should encourage grantees to establish realistic plans for service to new areas and require compliance with those plans. Technical assistance may be required to assist new grantees in establishing feasible performance objectives.

The most common capacity-building strategy among vocational rehabilitation agencies was to use Section 312 funding to develop services in an area with large numbers of farmworkers and, then, to use funding in subsequent years to target new areas for concentrated effort. Six of the eleven agencies funded had used this strategy at some time.

The states which used this strategy encountered some difficulty in replicating the service delivery model in new target areas. The states which were involved in this process of developing service in a new area during the period of the E.H. White and Company evaluation included Colorado, Illinois, Texas, and Washington. Table VI-2 shows the level of service the new offices at the time of the E.H. White and Company site visit.

In Texas, efforts to develop service to a new area (El Paso) were concentrated on building the organizational linkages required to establish effective service to MSFW's. After two years of effort, the Project Director expected to have service to MSFW's underway in the third year.

These difficulties in building service capabilities in new areas are to be expected. Establishing effective VR service for MSFW's in a new area requires hiring staff who must possess a combination of skills not easily found in rural areas, familiarizing other social service providers with the program, and establishing the trust of the local farmworker community. In the opinion of the evaluators, management efforts to build service capabilities in the new areas were exemplary in Illinois and Colorado. In Washington, the project had not successfully built on previous efforts and was, essentially, re-inventing the service delivery model.





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TABLE VI-2  
LEVEL OF SERVICE IN NEWLY ESTABLISHED PROJECT OFFICES<sup>119</sup>

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<u>STATE, PROJECT OFFICE</u>	<u>OPEN CASES</u>	<u>CLOSED CASES</u>
COLORADO		
Delta	42	24
ILLINOIS		
Anna	26	13
Bloomington	37	3
WASHINGTON		
Mt. Vernon	33	-

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Source: State MIS Data, 11 states

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<sup>119</sup> These offices had been established for less than 2 years at the time of the site visits and were identified in Section 312 project grant applications as service expansion areas. Numbers of open cases and closed cases are for the year prior to the site visit.



**FINDING VI-4:** State VR agencies' are strongly committed to maintaining service to MSFW's after termination of Section 312 funding, but service levels decrease slightly after loss of Section 312 funding.

**RECOMMENDATION VI-4:** State VR agencies should continue to monitor service in offices which have been set up under Section 312 to serve MSFW's and provide management support, as needed, to maintain levels of effort.

Substantial effort was required to maintain level and quality of service in areas where Section 312 project funding had been used to build a service delivery capability and, then, withdrawn. The evaluation design did not include visits to non-project offices, but MIS data and project manager's reports indicate that there was a tendency for level and quality of service to decrease slightly when management attention shifted to a new area.

Several of the states evaluated are engaged in efforts to maintain the level and quality of service in previous project areas. In Illinois, the Section 312 grant objectives included ongoing management support provided by the Project Director to offices previously funded under Section 312. In Colorado, ongoing management support to previous Section 312 offices was not identified as a grant objective but was provided informally by the Project Director.

Several of the state VR agencies which were receiving Section 312 funding (California, Florida, and Texas) in the past had lost the funding for an interval of a year. According to Project Directors, service to MSFW's continued, but at a slightly reduced level in the absence of federal funding.



**FINDING VI-5:** The interagency collaboration between Section 312 projects and other agencies serving MSFW's in local communities is a very strong feature of the program. However, decreases in federal funding of major programs such as JTPA, and Migrant Health, jeopardize the effectiveness of VR services at the local level since these programs are an important source of similar benefits, and thus, provide support to the rehabilitation of MSFW's.

**RECOMMENDATION VI-5:** RSA should, at the national level, initiate close coordination with the Migrant Health Program (HHS) and with the Office of Farmworker and Rural Employment Programs (DOL) in order to improve the infrastructure required to provide vocational training and physical restoration services available to handicapped MSFW's.

All the Section 312 projects have been active in collaborating with other local service providers to build service delivery systems which can provide the diverse services required to successfully rehabilitate handicapped farmworkers. However, a decreasing level of federal funding for Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) programs which are the source of similar benefits to MSFW's who are VR clients (benefits at no cost to the state VR agency) jeopardizes the utility of these networks.

In the period from 1980-1986, funding for farmworker employment training programs under JTPA, Section 402 (an important source of vocational training for VR clients), fell from an annual level of \$80 million to an annual level of \$60 million, a 25% decrease without adjusting for inflation.

During the same period, funding for Migrant Health programs has risen only very slightly, from a level of \$43 million to a current level of \$45 million. The Director of the Migrant Health Program estimates that the program is currently serving only 17% of the total MSFW population; she believes that a level of service reaching 20-30% of the population is required.<sup>120</sup>

During the same period of time, Section 312 funding has fallen from its peak level of \$1.5 million to approximately \$1 million, a 33% decrease. At an annual funding level of approximately \$1 million, RSA cannot provide adequate service to the estimated 25% of the MSFW population which is vocationally

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<sup>120</sup> Telephone conversation, Sonia Leon Reig, Acting Director, Migrant Health Program, March, 1987





handicapped without either increasing the Section 312 level of funding or establishing interagency agreements to allocate appropriate levels of funding for provision of vocational training and physical restoration services to MSFW's.

Local governments in rural areas do not have the tax base to substitute local dollars for the shrinking federal dollars. Although projects have developed close relationships with hospitals to utilize Hill-Burton funds for clients' hospitalization, hospitals' commitments are not adequate to cover more than a small portion of the need. Interagency coordination to pool transportation resources disintegrate as funding for the purchase of new vehicles or drivers' salaries disappears.

Ironically, the social service support network is stronger than the educational and vocational training network. It is currently easier for a farmworker to qualify for public assistance than to receive vocational training to secure permanent full-time employment. Collaborative efforts to support bilingual vocational training needed to put farmworkers into stable employment have decreased in the few areas where they are available because JTPA-supported training facilities have decreased the number of available "training slots" or closed their doors.



**FINDING VI-6:** There has been little innovation in the Section 312 program. The primary capacity-building successes have been in staffing VR agencies with bilingual/bicultural counseling staff, in conducting active outreach, and in networking with other agencies providing services to MSFW's. The most positive developments in agencies' abilities to provide effective VR services to MSFW's stem from overall agency efforts to improve VR services. These promising adaptations include: career orientation/work adjustment classes (Texas Rehabilitation Commission) and job clubs (California Department of Rehabilitation.)

**RECOMMENDATION VI-6:** RSA should solicit and support further development of innovative approaches to developing MSFW's career awareness.

The developmental emphasis in the Section 312 program has focused more on quantity rather than quality. The current model for delivering services to MSFW's was conceptualized over a decade ago. The current limited efforts to improve service quality are valuable but do not represent a thorough effort to adapt the traditional model of VR services to the special needs of MSFW's. There have been few adaptations to the special needs of handicapped MSFW's (development of career awareness, remedial education, vocational training, "fast tracking" of services) addressing a number of critical issues. Counselors have adapted their counseling efforts and case management approaches to MSFW's but projects have not developed new kinds of approaches to the rehabilitation of handicapped MSFW's.

Analysts of the agricultural labor force have drawn attention to the fundamental ongoing changes in the industry; changes in production techniques have transformed the agricultural workplace.<sup>121</sup> As in the case of other industries undergoing rapid change, there is a critical need for private-public sector collaborations to begin to track and project labor market demand. This is one of the obvious areas where Section 312 projects should have been actively involved in innovation but where the fundamental issues never attracted attention.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Philip Martin provides a good overview in "Labor Intensive Agriculture" (Scientific American, October, 1983). A more comprehensive study is "Labor's Dwindling Harvest: The Impact of Mechanization on California Fruit and Vegetable Workers (Office of Research and Development, Employment Training Administration, DOL, 1978).

<sup>122</sup> (footnote on following page)



Despite the predominance of heavy physical labor in rural labor markets, Section 312 projects have not seriously addressed the possibility of relocating MSFW's into adjacent urban labor markets. Although, Section 312 counselors interviewed pointed to MSFW families' reluctance to relocate, none reported engaging in efforts to explore under what circumstances relocation would be acceptable.<sup>123</sup>

In some cases where innovations were proposed, inability to resolve regulatory questions relating to the innovation posed problems, although the difficulties were primarily technical. Idaho, for example requested RSA authorization to address specific short-term medical problems that, if left unattended, would ultimately culminate in long-term vocational handicaps but was refused authorization by the Regional office, although the rationale for such service is extremely powerful. In California, an innovative model for developing career awareness through job-shadowing had been proposed (and approved for funding) but was not implemented because the Regional Officer and the California Project Director could not resolve the problems relating to DOL work regulations.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> (footnote from previous page)

A JTPA Section 402 grantee, California Human Development Corporation has been conducting a demonstration project in private-public sector training in agricultural skills upgrading for MSFW's which currently operates in San Joaquin County. The importance of skills upgrading in connection with vocational rehabilitation is that the higher-skilled jobs do not involve the heavy physical labor required of field harvesters, irrigators, and cultivators.

<sup>123</sup> Although many MSFW's are, indeed, reluctant to move to urban areas, this occupational/geographic migration is taking place. MSFW families in many areas are moving into service occupations and living in urban areas as part of an overall cyclical movement in which new immigrants enter into the agricultural labor force and acculturated workers leave.

<sup>124</sup> This issue arose in a number of JTPA projects and was resolved either by paying job-shadowing participants, or modifying the model so that job-shadowing did not involve productive work.





The emphasis on individualized service in vocational rehabilitation has tended to decrease interest in project models or highly articulated techniques for service delivery. Counseling staff who were interviewed generally felt that there was a conflict between the concept of individualized service and models.

Project managers were more oriented than counselors toward the concept of developing innovative service delivery models. But even those managers who felt that it would be valuable to experiment with new service delivery techniques did not feel that it was possible to engage in such efforts currently. Innovations discussed with managers included several promising concepts, none of which had been implemented. These innovations included:

- rehabilitation teams involving staff from different social service agencies
- creation of sheltered workshops to transition MSFW's into nonagricultural occupations
- job shadowing to develop MSFW's occupational awareness

Project managers' attention was more focused on the day to day issues of operations; Section 312 financial support was not felt to be adequate to initiate new efforts which had a good chance of success.

The reluctance to engage in innovative approaches to problem solving stems, in part, from quite practical concerns. Since RSA monitoring of project performance has not been vigorous, there is little incentive to solve the refractory problems which remain. In addition, the additional visibility stemming from creative attempts to innovate is not expected to be rewarded.

Given the bias against innovation, it is fortunate that some limited testing of new approaches has been attempted in the Section 312 projects. Promising efforts include:



### Illinois Department of Rehabilitation Services

In this project, there is a comprehensive effort to evaluate existing vocational evaluation tools to determine which are most useful with MSFW's. The project has translated a work sampling module, the MESA, into Spanish and transports the module to MSFW homes to speed up the evaluation process.

### Texas Rehabilitation Commission

This project is experimenting with different approaches to career orientation/work adjustment workshops for MSFW's. The workshop basic curriculum was developed as part of the agency's efforts to improve placement services, but has been modified to meet the needs of MSFW's and the differing conditions in very different sites (the Texas Panhandle, the lower Rio Grande Valley, and Laredo).

### California Department of Rehabilitation

This project is experimenting with a Spanish-language job club which takes place weekly. It involves both MSFW's and other Spanish-speaking clients in San Jose, a job market with some availability of jobs open to job-seekers with limited English.



FINDING VI-7: Administrative initiatives with a strong positive impact on service to MSFW's include use of an on-line MIS and service authorization system (Texas Rehabilitation Commission) and a system of "weighted closures" to evaluate office and counselor performance (Texas Commission for the Blind).

RECOMMENDATION VI-7: RSA should review, in the coming year, establishing a system of "weighted closures" (based on functional assessment with the Functional Assessment Inventory) to be utilized in monitoring Section 312 project performance in FY '89.

Two developments in vocational rehabilitation agency management which were initiated as part of overall organizational initiatives deserve particular attention because of their relevance for the management of services to MSFW's. One of these is the Texas Commission for the Blind's adoption of a system of "weighted closures" developed in order to provide counselors with incentives to serve the most difficult cases and to emphasize quality of job at placement. The other promising management initiative is the Texas Rehabilitation Commission's development of an interactive on-line MIS system which includes the ability to secure "instant" authorizations for purchased services, interoffice transfers of clients' files, and editing of case information.

The system of "weighted closures" can be established for the Section 312 program quite rapidly and easily; however, the development of on-line MIS and case management systems falls into the realm of overall management initiatives by VR agencies.

These are discussed in the following section.

### Weighted Closures

The Texas Commission for the Blind's system of weighted closures "weights" closures by giving "quality points" for two desired outcomes: rehabilitation of the more severely handicapped clients and higher wages at closure. The system of weighted closures is based on a one-page weighting chart that consists of a matrix consisting of 2 dimensions (SEVERITY) and (WAGE RATE). As can be seen from the Exhibit below, increasing severity and increasing wage rates combine to give counselors a variety of options to achieve the same number of points.





# MATRIX FOR 26 CLOSURES

Work Status Categories  
and Income Levels  
at Time of Closure

## Disabilities Categories

### At Time of Closure

Totally blind OU with catastrophic 2nd disability (includes LPO OU)

Legally blind OU with catastrophic 2nd disability (includes HM OU or CF OU)

Totally blind OU (includes LPO OU)

Legally blind OU (includes HM OU or CF OU and 20° visual field or less OU)

Visual impairment with catastrophic 2nd disability (includes visual fields of 30° OU or less)

Blind one eye - other eye defective (20/70 or worse or 30° visual field or less)

Visual impairment of 20/199 - 20/70 OU or 30° visual fields OU or less

20/60 or better in best eye with or without severe 2nd disability. Also one-eyed clients. Also no visual impairment with catastrophic 2nd disability

No visual impairment at closure, 20/60 or better with field greater than 30° in both eyes

Transmittal #36 Effective Date: 1/87

Competitive employment at or above \$134/week and self-employment at or above \$134/week	Business Enterprises Program	Sheltered employment at or above \$134/week	Competitive employment below \$134/week and self-employment below \$134/week	Sheltered employment below \$134/week	Unpaid family worker Homemaker
900	675	450	300	284	160
720	550	375	227	170	96
600	510	345	214	161	91
500	400	320	176	132	74
310		185	139	104	59
180		135	101	76	43
120		90	68	51	29
61		45	34	26	15
30		23	17	13	8

I.

II.

III.



The weighted closures system is implemented within a management structure that stresses management by objectives (MBO). Regional supervisors negotiate with individual counselors in order to meet regional objectives for total numbers of "points" (quantity and quality of rehabilitations). Individual counselors can meet their objectives by delivering whatever mix of service provides the required number of points (based on severity of handicap and outcome as measured by wage at closure).

The system, as implemented by the Texas Commission for the Blind, has some flexibility, allowing for variations in performance, based on variations in local conditions which are presumed to affect difficulty of placement, variations in caseload, etc. Such variability, linked with the negotiation of acceptable objectives at multiple levels within the organization is an important aspect of the system. This feature removes the objection that the system is mechanistic or difficult to adapt to differing circumstances.

While the system of management incentives based on "weighted closures" was criticized by many of the vocational rehabilitation professionals interviewed for a) its perceived susceptibility to manipulation and b) the difficulties involved in establishing equitable weighting, the alternatives seem little better. These alternatives include both "flat" expectations for counselor performance (e.g., a required caseload and/or performance level) or informal agreements with supervisors incorporating intuitive adjustments for specific caseload or local conditions. Counseling staff interviewed all were somewhat ambiguous in responding to inquiries regarding motivation or performance "rewards" emphasizing, on the one hand, professional autonomy and the ability to adopt a unique personal rehabilitation style, but also lamenting the degree to which the rehabilitation process was driven by the need to maximize rehabilitations. The difficult question of performance incentives is more general than the question of appropriate incentives for provision of effective service to handicapped farmworkers, as it arises inevitably in considering the different subpopulations that may be served by a VR agency. However, it is clear that the Texas Commission for the Blind provides one feasible approach to achieving the delicate balance between quality of service and quantity or "productivity", despite fairly widespread opposition to "merit" or performance standards in any explicit form.



## On-Line MIS

The Texas Rehabilitation Commission's on-line interactive MIS system has significant potential in a critical role, decreasing the amount of time spent on paperwork and increasing the ability to "fast track" MSFW clients. An extremely important feature of the system is that it allows on-line authorizations for counselor requisitions (incorporating budget data on encumbered project or counselor funds into the database). The system also allows a counselor in one office to instantly secure the records of a client who requests service, without the time-consuming process of waiting for the client's previous counselor to copy and mail the records. The system also allows editing of client data as required, allowing for up-to-date information on performance.

Staff in several Texas Rehabilitation Commission offices are currently experimenting with the potential of the MIS system which includes a calendaring system that flags cases for followup, generates letters regarding appointments, and allows for on-line authorization of services. There is also the capability for counselors to download data into a local database that can then be sorted to look at their performance in serving clients based on a number of key fields (e.g. by sex, by age, by disability).

There is strong central administration support for development of the system because Texas is such a rural state; in addition, there is a long-term agency strategy for developing staff ability to use the system and increasing the system's capabilities<sup>125</sup>.

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<sup>125</sup> Interview with Texas Rehabilitation Commission Deputy Director, Dale Place, November 20, 1986.





## Relation to Evaluation Standards

The evaluation standards relevant to state success in building their capabilities to serve handicapped MSFW's are the following ones:

### Capacity Building Outcomes

The farmworker service projects should build state vocational rehabilitation agencies' capabilities to provide increased levels of service and quality of service to farmworkers.

- 6.1 The capacity-building impact of farmworker service projects should be measured, in part, by increases in levels and quality of service to farmworkers by state vocational rehabilitation agencies, taking into account individual capacity-building objectives, levels of federal support received, and continuity of support.
- 6.2 The capacity-building impact of farmworker service projects should be assessed, in part, by their success in developing innovative or especially effective service delivery models.

The Section 312 program has been very successful in building state VR agencies capacity to provide handicapped MSFW's with access to the VR system. The impact of federal funding has extended beyond the Section 312 projects. In addition, state VR agencies are committed to maintaining service to MSFW's after termination of federal funding. However, since service to MSFW's is more time-consuming than service to non-MSFW's, level of service to MSFW's is likely to fall after termination of Section 312 funding.

Section 312 funding has not resulted in a high level of innovation. This is a serious problem because the traditional model of vocational rehabilitation services does not address many of the important issues faced in the rehabilitation of handicapped MSFW's. These critical issues that have been sidestepped include a) the need to provide MSFW's with basic information regarding their employment options, b) the role of prevention in addressing the occupational health aspects of farmworker disability, c) the need to build institutional capacity in rural areas where there are severe constraints on available rehabilitation resources, and d) the desirability of effecting changes in the seasonality of clients' employment. The common thread that links these issues is that within the VR system there are not currently adequate incentives to encourage efforts which can not be documented in terms of



status 26 closures within the RSA-911 reporting system. While improvements in individualized rehabilitation planning, disability prevention, institutional capacity-building, and long-term impacts on clients' employability are seen as valuable abstract goals by VR professionals, they are all lower in priority than the primary goal of increasing performance as measured by existing measures.

Nonetheless, certain of the developmental efforts in service delivery strategy (career orientation/work adjustment classes and job clubs) provide a strong basis for increased attention to the innovations required to improve the effectiveness of VR services for MSFW's. Similarly, the management systems established by the Texas Rehabilitation Commission (on-line MIS) and the Texas Commission for the Blind (closures weighted by severity of handicap and wage at closure) are readily adaptable to provide improved case management to MSFW's and to provide valuable management incentives to further increase service to the most severely handicapped MSFW's.

This system is quite easily adaptable to a generic weighting system for service to MSFW's by incorporating into the system, "severity weights" generated by the Functional Assessment Inventory (see Discussion in Section V). The requirement to insure that such a "weighted closures" system function effectively is primarily to scale the "quality points" into a range which provides a balanced set of management initiatives.

### Summary

The initiation of Section 312 funding in 1975 provided the impetus for the "first wave" of innovation required to develop a service delivery system which could successfully rehabilitate migrant and seasonal farmworkers. This basic system had been developed by 1980. It is imperative that the capacity-building efforts turn now to solving the problems which remain. To accomplish this, it will be necessary that the developmental strategy include serious attention to the issue of innovation.



## SECTION VII: PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

FINDING VII-1: Project applications submitted to RSA do not always state objectives clearly. Projects usually met primary objectives regarding levels of service, but did not always implement secondary objectives (such as staff training, proposed research, or innovation). Projects seldom implemented the evaluation plans that were submitted as part of the Section 312 funding application.

RECOMMENDATION VII-1: Planning for Section 312 projects should be integrated with the development of State Plans. Grant negotiations should insure that objectives are clearly stated. RSA should monitor Section 312 projects based on achievement of all stated objectives, including implementation of any proposed evaluation plan.

Project planning at the state level is usually an informal process consisting primarily of preparing a grant application to RSA and securing letters of support from collaborating agencies. The planning (grantwriting) process is carried out by the Project Directors, who are often Program Specialists in the Central Administration of the state VR agency. However, in two states, Idaho and Utah, the planning process made use of formal evaluation/research efforts which had been conducted in the previous year. In two other states, Illinois and Texas, Section 312 project planning did not rely on a formal planning process but did incorporate previous VR agency experience into the establishment of objectives in a straightforward and productive fashion.

Most project applications do not analyze service delivery issues with much thoroughness or clearly identify service delivery problems and define organizational strategies to address them. Narratives, instead, focus more on generalities regarding needs for MSFW services.

### Definition of Objectives/Evaluation

E.H. White and Company reviewed Section 312 project grant applications and requests for continuation of funding, as a basis for each of the state case studies. Attention was given to both objective performance objectives (e.g. numbers served, rehabilitation rates, numbers of new plans) and to process objectives (e.g., "to develop innovative methods to serve MSFW's", "to train staff").







There was substantial variation among the types of objectives specified. Service objectives usually received more attention in the application than the objectives having to do with process objectives such as innovation, research objectives, or evaluation procedures. Table VII-1 provides an overview of the major types of objectives to be accomplished with the requested Section 312 support:

TABLE VII-1  
TYPES OF OBJECTIVES IN SECTION 312 GRANT APPLICATIONS

STATE	SERVICE EXISTING AREA	SERVICE EXPANSION TO NEW	STAFF TRN/ MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT	RESEARCH/ INNOVATION OR OTHER RELATED
CALIFORNIA	yes	no	no	yes
COLORADO	no	yes	yes	no
FLORIDA	yes	yes	no	no
IDAHO	yes	yes	no	yes
ILLINOIS	no	yes	yes	yes
NEW YORK	yes	no	yes	no
TEXAS-GRAL	yes	yes	no	yes
TEXAS-BLIND	yes	no	no	no
UTAH	yes	no	no	yes
VIRGINIA	yes	no	yes	no
WASHINGTON	no	yes	no	no
TOTAL STATING THIS TYPE OBJECTIVE	8	4	4	5

Table VII-2 presents an overview of the quality of Section 312 project specification of objectives and evaluation measures:



TABLE VII-2  
SPECIFICATION OF OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVES AS STATED IN APPLICATION WERE:	PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES			PROCESS OBJECTIVES PROCEDURES/EVALUATION		
	<u>ALL</u>	<u>MOST</u>	<u>FEW</u>	<u>ALL</u>	<u>MOST</u>	<u>FEW</u>
Measurable and appropriate	7	3	1	6	4	1
Clearly defined	4	7	0	7	2	2
Consistent throughout application	3	6	2	3	5	3
Achieved/implemented as stated	4	4	3	5	3	3

The most serious problems in specification of project objectives were that grant applications would not provide clear and consistent definitions of objectives. When objectives were inconsistent, it was unclear which commitment was the genuine one. "Numbers served" on grant application cover sheets were based on varying definitions of "served" and had no clear relation to statements within the grant narrative regarding numbers served.

A general problem was that project applications were ambiguous as to whether applicants who were not accepted for VR service were to be included in total "numbers served". In several cases, "total numbers served" were inconsistent with "number to be rehabilitated" unless it was to be assumed that all client contacts constituted service, or that rehabilitation rates (total number of rehabilitations divided by closed after being accepted for service) were very low.

Two of the applications contained serious inconsistencies stemming from "boilerplating" segments of the proposal inappropriately (e.g., a 1985 proposal had 1984 staff training dates in it).

Process objectives were not defined so as to be measurable. Statements regarding "improved quality" or "staff training" did not specify measures of service quality or training content.



There was, in addition, great variation in degree of specificity of objectives regarding client services. While some projects would specify a number of performance measures (e.g. new referrals, new plans, proportions of severely disabled to be served), others would simply specify number of rehabilitations or "numbers served."

As can be seen from Table VII-2, most projects achieved their major objectives. But in several cases, projects had specified a second tier of objectives, which were not considered by project management to be major objectives and were, therefore, ignored.

Projects' utilization of the evaluation procedures specified was inconsistent. Although all the projects used some procedure to evaluate project performance, the actual procedure was not always the one specified in the grant application. The evaluation plans for two of the projects experiencing the most administrative inadequacies (Florida and California) were among the most elaborate proposed; they were not implemented at all. The Florida evaluation plan had been developed about three years prior to the current application and was boilerplated into proposals from year to year. The California evaluation plan was not implemented, nor were many of the project objectives. California had proposed an innovative project consisting of services targeted to youth, but implemented a standard design (quite satisfactorily) without submitting modifications or notifying RSA of changes in either its objectives or its evaluation plan.





**FINDING VII-2:** Grantees used Section 312 funds for staffing, purchase of case services for MSFW's, or both. State levels of match were quite high, but were not documented consistently. Estimated level of state match (including staff time and purchased case services from Section 110 funds) ranged from the required 10% minimum to 200% of the Section 312 grant.

**RECOMMENDATION VII-2:** RSA should maintain the versatility of the Section 312 funding program, but more emphasis should be placed on capacity-building and innovation.

Section 312 funding was used, in some instances, more like supplemental funding, than "project" funding. That is, it is used to supplement ongoing activities rather than providing total support for a new well defined "project".

The paradigm case of the "project" use of funds was in Colorado, Illinois, and Washington where Section 312 funds were used to support both staff and purchase case services in order to extend VR services to MSFW's in a new geographical area. The Illinois project was similar, but Section 312 funds were used entirely for staff and related operating expenses.

In contrast, grantees such as the Texas Rehabilitation Commission, the Texas Commission for the Blind, and the Virginia Department of Rehabilitation used Section 312 funds almost entirely for the purchase of case services.

Levels of match were, in some cases, very high, but there was no uniform approach to accounting for match. In the case of the Texas Rehabilitation Commission, E. H. White and Company estimates that the state match was approximately 200% of the grant, based on level of staff effort in serving MSFW's and purchase of case services.<sup>126</sup> TRC did not, however, maintain project records on actual match.

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<sup>126</sup> Level of staff effort was estimated based on varying proportions of MSFW's in counselor caseload. Use of Section 110 funds for MSFW service was estimated by the TRC Project Director, based on the fact that Section 312 funds would normally support case services for no more than 6 months of each year, generally less. After Section 312 funds were exhausted, Section 110 funds would be used for purchased case services for MSFW's. However, since states did not calculate match on a consistent basis, actual levels of match are difficult to determine.



Based on the levels of service, staffing patterns, and average cost of purchased case services per client, several states which used Section 312 funds on a project basis (Colorado, Washington, Illinois, and Utah) were probably close to the minimum match. The other projects over-matched in varying degrees.

Among the states likely to have intermediate levels of match, Idaho is the only one which provided an accounting of state match which included both staff time and client services. The state match for Idaho was at 75% of Section 312 funds.<sup>127</sup>

Table VII-3 presents a breakdown of typologies of utilization of federal funds and source of state match for Section 312 funds. As can be seen from this Table, there is a good deal of variation in use of funds and in type of state match. In contrast to project objectives, budgets are well articulated, well justified, and straightforwardly presented.

The availability of federal support for purchased case services for MSFW's in states where the Section 312 project involves continuation of services to MSFW's provides a strong incentive to counselors to take the extra effort to work with MSFW's since they receive credit for MSFW rehabilitations; but the cost of case services is not charged to the individual counselor's budget.

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<sup>127</sup> Letter from George Pelletier, Administrator, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, State of Idaho, February 20, 1987.



TABLE VII-3  
UTILIZATION OF FEDERAL SUPPORT BY SECTION 312 PROJECTS

<u>STATE</u>	<u>PRIMARY STAFF</u>	<u>USE OF 312 FUNDS CLIENT SERVICES</u>	<u>PRIMARY STAFF</u>	<u>SOURCE OF MATCH CLIENT SERVICES</u>
CALIFORNIA	x	x	x	-
COLORADO	x	x	x	-
FLORIDA	x	x	-	x
IDAHO	x	x	x	x
ILLINOIS	x	-	x	-
NEW YORK	x	-	x	x
TEXAS (Gral)	-	x	x	x
TEXAS (Blind)	-	x	x	x
UTAH	x	x	x	-
VIRGINIA	-	x	x	-
WASHINGTON	x	x	x	-





**FINDING VII-3:** Management support for Section 312 projects was best in states which had long-term project managers. There were varying degrees of problems stemming from Project Director's lack of authority over counseling staff because of conflicts between overall VR agency goals/procedures and project objectives.

**RECOMMENDATION VII-3:** State VR agencies should increase the level of management support to Section 312 projects and expand the scope of Project Directors' authority to make project-related decisions.

All grantees used their regular service delivery system to provide services to MSFW's. Project management was provided by regular staff to whom the Section 312 project had been assigned. In most states, the project management was assigned to a staff person in the central administrative office. In four states, the project manager was, instead, a field office supervisor who had been assigned the responsibility of the Section 312 project.

The degree of authority assigned to the project manager and clear-cut assignment of responsibilities seemed to determine whether the organizational arrangement worked well. In all the Section 312 states, the Project Director's role included a great deal of coordination with the regular chain of command to accomplish both Section 312 project objectives and the local office's objectives. The degree of enthusiasm with which local office supervisors supported the goals and objectives of the Section 312 project was felt by Project Directors to have an important effect on the effectiveness of counseling staff.

Two projects subcontracted important aspects of service delivery. In one (Utah), the subcontract involved a community organization in conducting outreach to the MSFW community. In the other (Illinois), vocational rehabilitation counselors were hired through a community organization and transitioned to the regular VR agency staff after a year of training. The same organization provided bilingual vocational assessment to MSFW's. The Illinois organizational model is an innovative one which worked successfully; it's replicability in other areas would depend on the feasibility of negotiating successful arrangements to transition the project staff to the regular VR agency.



There was great variation among states in the quality of project administration, judged by timeliness and accuracy of reporting of performance, accountability, problem-solving ability, staff morale, and financial management. Eight of the projects were managed well; three of these (Texas Commission for the Blind, the Illinois Department of Rehabilitation, and the Texas Rehabilitation Commission) were outstanding.

However, three of the projects had administrative deficiencies. In two of these projects (California and Florida), there was little management accountability and coordination; in both, Project Directors were unclear regarding the degree of authority they possessed and were unaware of levels of spending.<sup>128</sup> In the third state (Virginia), there were inadequacies in the MIS data submitted to E.H. White and Co. and to the RSA regional office.<sup>129</sup>

A major constraint on state administration of Section 312 was that project managers generally spent less than 10% of their time on the projects; it was felt in most VR agencies that the small size of the Section 312 grants did not warrant greater attention. Within these constraints, project managers provided the Section 312 with a high level of attention.

Staff turnover was also a critical factor in administrative adequacy; the states which had continuous project leadership for a number of years had excellent administration. Staff turnover or reassignment was a contributing factor to problems in the agencies with inadequate project administration.

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<sup>128</sup> The Project Director in California was unaware of the reasons for underspending on the Section 312 grant and suggested that counselors were not using the assigned project code for services to MSFW's correctly. The Deputy Director for Field Operations also was unaware of the reason for underspending. In Florida, at the time of the E.H. White and Co. site visit, in November, 1986 staff had discovered in the previous week that the grant was seriously underspent, perhaps because the budgeted staff salaries had never been charged to the Section 312 grant.

<sup>129</sup> At the time of the E.H. White and Co. site visit in October, 1986 data was not available on open cases and the Project Director was unaware of levels of service and other information on program operations. Data submitted to the RSA regional office seemed inconsistent with data submitted to E.H. White and Co. for FY'86, although lack of clarity in presentation made definitive comparison very difficult.





**FINDING VII-4:** State VR agency Management Information Systems (MIS) are not generally designed to provide information on a project basis for the Section 312 grants. The primary use of MIS information is for annual reporting to RSA. Project-oriented MIS data was difficult to generate and not generally used for management purposes.

**RECOMMENDATION VII-4A:** State VR agencies should review the potential utility of customized reports on Section 312 project performance for management purposes, as well as for required reporting to RSA.

**RECOMMENDATION VII-4B:** RSA should strengthen the planning, reporting, and evaluation components of state VR projects by increasing the level of monitoring and establishing standardized formats for reporting project performance. Regional office staff should provide the technical assistance in the area of reporting.

The state management information systems were not set up to generate MIS data on a project basis for the Section 312 projects. Although all the VR agencies reviewed individual counselors' performance periodically, the performance review was usually conducted by the regular office supervisors rather than Section 312 staff. Performance criteria, therefore, did not include quality or quantity of service to MSFW's per se, but rather overall production.

Two vocational rehabilitation agencies (the Texas Rehabilitation Commission and the Texas Commission for the Blind) had an interactive MIS system; however, neither agency used it regularly as a tool for managing service to MSFW's.

One grantee, the Utah Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, had commissioned a formal outside evaluation and was using the results as a means of analyzing performance and improving service delivery. The evaluation designed included routine collection and crosstabulation of key MIS data. Several successful service improvement strategies emerged from this evaluative effort.<sup>130</sup> The Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation has also commissioned an outside study of the agency's service to MSFW's and used the information for subsequent planning. Another state, California, had performed in 1978 a detailed in-house evaluation which had been an important factor in

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<sup>130</sup> Cespedes and Rivera, December 1986, Evaluation of the MSFW Project, Utah Department of Rehabilitation.





analyzing and addressing key issues in serving farmworkers.<sup>131</sup> In the other states, the evaluation of performance was informal.

The client data collected by state VR agencies for mandatory reporting of RSA 911 data (basic program performance data) provides an excellent basis for analyzing Section 312 project performance. However, it is not often utilized for management or project evaluation purposes. In the cases where client data was analyzed for program management purposes the information provided the basis for management initiatives to improve performance.

An important aspect of the data analysis performed by E.H. White and Co. in the current study and by Cespedes and Rivera in Utah is that it includes crosstabulations on key demographic variables (sex, age, education, primary language, and disability) that are useful in analyzing patterns of program performance when combined with measures of clients' program experience (e.g., status, length of time in status, receipt of specific services).

Although most states emphasized service to migrants, none distinguished Section 312 clients as "migrants" or as "seasonal" farmworkers, since this information is not required by RSA.

Although several states used Section 312 funding as "rotating" funding only one state (California) regularly monitored service level to MSFW's in non-project offices. Such monitoring would be extremely useful for both state and federal decision-making.

Regular reporting was via narrative reports which discussed progress toward achieving grant objectives, a process made problematic by the variations in specificity and performance levels established in grant applications. There was no standard format for reporting performance to RSA and the detail of data submitted to RSA to comply with reporting requirements and to secure continued funding from RSA varies from state to state. Although

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<sup>131</sup> California Department of Rehabilitation, 1979. This report was the basis for an important change in service strategy - targetting services to urban farmworkers, provision of remedial education, and strengthening of private sector linkages.



Section 312 grant agreements specify compliance with RSA reporting requirements, grantee submission of reports was not always timely and the quality of reporting varied greatly. Grantees did not consider RSA monitoring or administrative oversight adequate to compel reporting; submission of reports was, essentially, voluntary.



FINDING VII-5: State VR agencies' management policies pose serious constraints on service to MSFW's. The key policies which negatively affect service are:

Order of Selection State policies on order of selection designed to give priority of service to the severely disabled have had a negative impact on services to MSFW's because current determination of severity underestimate the seriousness of MSFW functional handicaps. In states with orders of selection, purchase of case services for MSFW's classified as non-severe is not authorized, effectively denying them service.

Similar Benefits State management policies designed to maximize counselors' utilization of similar benefits (no-cost services from other programs) have slowed provision of services to MSFW's in some offices, resulting in less effective service to MSFW's for whom "fast tracking" is an important factor in success.

RECOMMENDATION VII-5 A: (See Section V-4) RSA should encourage Section 312 projects to utilize the Functional Assessment Inventory as a basis for evaluating MSFW's severity of functional handicap. Functional assessment of severity should be combined with a system of "weighted closures" to provide effective management incentives to the rehabilitation of the most severely handicapped MSFW's.

RECOMMENDATION VII-5 B: RSA should review federal and state grant programs in order to determine appropriate levels of support to encourage the service delivery system to provide MSFW's with substantial interventions, including physical restoration services and vocational training.

#### Order of Selection

34 CFR, Part 361.36 paragraph (b) requires that "those groups of individuals with the most severe handicaps are selected for service before any other groups of handicapped individuals" when all eligible individuals cannot be served.

Although the federal requirement is that severity of handicap serve as the basis for an order of selection, those Section 312 projects operating under an order of selection, had policies which directed counselors to make determinations regarding case services based on severity of disability. The distinction is a crucial one because the pattern of MSFW disability is one where many MSFW's who have conditions which preclude their working in farmwork, do not meet RSA-defined definitions of severity of disability.





Two states were operating under an order of selection which seriously compromised their ability to provide VR services to MSFW's effectively at the time of the evaluation. In one state (Illinois), at the time of the evaluation, no purchased case services were to be authorized for non-severe clients. In the other state (Texas), no purchased case services for physical restoration were to be authorized for non-severe clients.

In both states where the order of selection interfered with counselors' ability to utilize purchased case services, attempts were made to secure similar benefits (services at no cost) for clients. However, despite these efforts, the search for similar benefits did not provide an adequate substitute for VR purchase of services because: a) the length of time a client needed to wait was prohibitively long or local resources were simply not available at no cost.

#### Similar Benefits: Physical Restoration

Provision of physical restoration services is a particularly crucial issue because services purchased by the vocational rehabilitation agency is the only resource available to MSFW's for major surgical services. Both Illinois and Texas attempted to cover hospitalization costs by securing similar benefits from local hospitals which had responsibilities to provide free medical services to medical indigents under the Hill-Burton Act. However, those resources were inadequate in both states. In the Rio Grande Valley, waiting lists for "charity" cases were approximately a year unless a medical emergency was involved. In the more rural areas of Texas, and in Illinois, local hospitals had entirely exhausted available funds.

While migrant health clinics provide an important source of similar benefits in both the states which had orders of selection, these clinics are primarily funded for provision of primary care. Although one of the 8 migrant health clinics in the nation that is funded to cover hospitalization costs for MSFW's is in the Rio Grande Valley, 80% of the hospitalization budget is utilized for obstetrics cases.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> (footnote on following page)



While approximately half of the disabilities experienced by MSFW's are work-related, Workers' Compensation does not provide a viable funding source for many of the medical restoration needs of handicapped MSFW's. The types of work injury suffered by MSFW's (such as back injuries, pesticide-related injuries, and visual handicaps) may be heavily litigated, effectively precluding receipt of even medical assistance since injured MSFW's are exempted from workers compensation coverage in many states.<sup>133</sup>

#### Similar Benefits: Vocational Training

The most effective training interventions for MSFW's are usually not available without being purchased. For clients with adequate educational levels and fluency in English, community college or local technical training schools are important resources, usually available at little or not cost. For MSFW's with limited educational levels and limited English speaking ability, these are not the preferable source of vocational training. The main alternative, OJT, is not easily available at no-cost.

Local employment training programs, funded by JTPA, are a possible source of OJT in some communities, but handicapped MSFW's must compete with other disadvantaged clients for limited "slots."

The best of the vocational training models for MSFW's (a combination of remedial education, vocational English as a second language, and hands-on skills training), offered by the Center for Employment training programs, in a number of farmworker areas, is also expensive.

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<sup>132</sup> (footnote from preceeding page) Interview with Dr. David Smith, Medical Director, Brownsville Community Health Center. Also see Dr. Smith's paper, "Hospitalization Costs for MSFW's", Migrant Health Newsletter, January, 1987.

<sup>133</sup> Workers' Compensation coverage of MSFW's is mandatory in Illinois, but employers using less than 500 person-days of labor per year are exempted from covering workers. In Texas, a 1986 law extends coverage to MSFW's but MSFW's who work temporarily for an employer are not aware of the Workers' Compensation benefits and may not file claims. In addition, the portions of the law requiring that labor contractors cover their employees is not easily enforceable, since growers may request, but are not required to request, evidence of the contractor's coverage.





## Quality of Service

Because of cost considerations, the quality of service to MSFW's suffers because of self-imposed rationing of service, generally at the counselor level. The counselor is biased against providing high-cost services to MSFW's because, given the management incentives in the traditional VR model, counselor performance is evaluated on cost-effectiveness, as well as levels of production. While the rationale for this set of management incentives is clear, the impact is that more expensive services are allocated to clients perceived as being most likely to succeed.

It is because of this consideration, that VR agencies have established countervailing incentives to serve the most severely disabled. The self-imposed rationing of services to MSFW's is particularly intractable because the managers of the Section 312 projects do not have supervisory authority over the counseling staff. Because of this, there have been few successful efforts by the Section 312 projects to address counselors' "style" in providing service to MSFW's. At present, the primary determinant of "style" or characteristic decision-making at the counselor level remains the local office supervisor who is not as motivated to improve quality of service to MSFW's as much as to improve performance statistics measured by new referrals, new plans, and/or status 26 closures. It is ironic that state VR agencies have so effectively established a rehabilitation service delivery system consisting of concerned bilingual/bicultural counselors who are so constrained by cost considerations that they cannot provide the most disadvantaged of the MSFW's with the services they need to become successfully rehabilitated into stable employment.

Section 312 funding of purchased case services is, as noted above, an important incentive in moving counselors to, in fact, provide MSFW's with services that must be purchased, if necessary. However, the incentive is not adequate, in part because the level of Section 312 funding requires that at the local level purchased services for MSFW's must, eventually, be provided from Section 110 funds and charged against the allocation of the individual counselors.





## Relevant Evaluation Standards

The relevant standards for the evaluation of the management of the Section 312 projects are the following:

3. MANAGEMENT STANDARDS: The management of farmworker service projects should meet the statutory and regulatory requirements of the federal program. Project management should also incorporate effective strategies allowing for quality and cost-effectiveness in serving farmworkers.
- 3.1 State vocational rehabilitation agencies should have administrative structures which provide farmworker service projects with leadership capable of addressing the special problems experienced in the rehabilitation of farmworkers.
  - 3.2 State vocational rehabilitation agencies should provide effective means to match federal funding under Section 312 to provide the maximum levels of service and highest possible quality of service to farmworkers in their states.
  - 3.3 State vocational rehabilitation agencies should provide effective management support to farmworker service projects, including effort, as appropriate, in the areas of staff recruitment, staff development, planning, and cost management.
  - 3.4 State vocational rehabilitation agencies should have appropriate coordination arrangements with other organizations providing services to farmworkers. This coordination should include, at a minimum, the coordination specified in Section 312 of the Rehabilitation Act.
  - 3.5 Farmworker service projects should possess management information systems that can be used effectively in planning, cost management, and provide an objective basis for monitoring project performance.
  - 3.6 State vocational rehabilitation agencies should evaluate farmworker service project process and performance periodically in relation to objectives of the federal project support and in relation to state in-house objectives and standards. This evaluation should be incorporated in the planning process.



## Summary

State administration of Section 312 projects presents a mixed picture; all states have committed financial and staff resources to serving MSEW's well beyond the level required by the federal guidelines; however, local policy directives and administrative problems have jeopardized effective service delivery to MSEW's in important parts of the country.

Given these considerations, it is a top priority to institute adequate procedures to determine the functional severity of MSEW's vocational handicaps to afford MSEW's the relatively expensive services that will be most effective in successfully rehabilitating them.

Project Directors have provided strong leadership in most states, but management support systems (MIS, business services, personnel) are not utilized with maximum effectiveness in supporting the objectives of the Section 312 projects. Project Directors manage the Section 312 projects with very low allocations of time, in part, because of the small size of the Section 312 grants. Administrative "overhead" (i.e., minimum reporting and accounting requirements) is inevitably high on grants under \$100,000, such as the Section 312 grants.

Relatively speaking, service delivery is a stronger part of the Section 312 program than the grants management aspect of the program.

RSA reliance on state VR agencies as the only delivery system for provision of VR services to MSEW's must be examined carefully with special attention to: a) increased monitoring and technical assistance to state VR agencies, b) initiatives to increase accountability in defining and complying with project objectives, c) solicitation of competition from qualified nonprofit organizations with expertise in serving MSEW's.



## Management Initiatives for Quality Service

The Texas Commission for the Blind system of weighting closures by a) severity of handicap and b) quality of outcome provides a framework that might be adapted for general use in states with significant MSFW populations. Inclusion of Functional Assessment Inventory scores as a first step in establishing a truly comprehensive measure of MSFW handicap in such a system, and rewards for nonagricultural job placements (because of the long-term benefits of permanent employment vs. short-term employment in farmwork) would provide a means of providing equitable service to MSFW's.

Sixty percent of the MSFW clients are currently classified as non-severe. It is not possible to estimate accurately how many of these clients would be recognized as being severely handicapped if a more sophisticated system for assessing severity of disability were used. Improved incentives to provide substantive services (including vocational training, physical restoration) to MSFW's are most needed in states where an order of selection is in effect; where an order of selection is not in effect, the need is not so pressing, but the incentives would result also in overall improvements in quality of service.





## SECTION VIII: FEDERAL PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

FINDING VIII-1: RSA has allocated the limited funding for the Section 312 program wisely and has increased national levels of service to handicapped MSFW's dramatically. However, the Section 312 program has not yet succeeded in establishing a national service delivery system allowing MSFW's the same level of rehabilitation service afforded to the general population, nor has it encouraged innovative approaches to service delivery.

RECOMMENDATION VIII-1: RSA should, at the national level, provide leadership designed to improve state VR agencies' ability to serve MSFW's. Leadership efforts should include the following initiatives:

- o Require that VR agency state plans address service to handicapped MSFW's.
- o Encourage Section 312 grantees to determine severity of MSFW handicaps based on functional limitations as assessed by the Functional Assessment Inventory.
- o Investigate measures of quality of service based on a system of "weighted" closures that provide state VR agencies with incentives to serve the most severely handicapped MSFW's and rehabilitate them into permanent, stable, employment.
- o Encourage increased competition for Section 312 funding by various means, including technical assistance in planning programs, regional office presentations to familiarize VR agencies with the grant program and the application process.
- o Provide program support in the form of improved monitoring and technical assistance to insure grantee accountability for meeting the objectives established in their applications for support.
- o Provide, via NIDRR, research and development support to address the critical issue of developing MSFW's awareness of employment other than field labor, harvesting, cultivating, and packing produce.
- o Reinstitute the annual conferences of Section 312 projects to provide a basis for exchanges among grantees regarding successful strategies, common problems, and developments in their field.

### Overview

The Section 312 program administrative system consists of a Program Officer within the RSA Central Office, and designated liaison staff in Regional Offices.



## Central Office

The Program Officer for the Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Service Projects is also responsible for two other discretionary grant programs, Recreational Service Programs for Individuals with Handicaps, and grants to Indian Tribes for the Rehabilitation of Indians with Handicaps. According to the Program Officer, the primary function of the RSA Central Administrative Office is to coordinate the program, conduct the peer review process for new grants and suggest funding to the Commissioner of RSA and Assistant Secretary, OSERS.

## Regional Offices

Aside from coordination, peer review and the funding process, the administrative and grants management responsibilities are delegated to RSA Regional offices. These functions include: negotiation of the final grant award and objectives, and technical assistance to grantees. Regional office responsibilities also include project monitoring and review of annual progress reports.

RSA Regional staff responsible for these functions are also responsible for a wide variety of other special programs. They coordinate closely with the designated liaison for the states which are grantees. In some regions, responsibilities for financial monitoring and program monitoring are specialized; in other regions, a single person is responsible for both functions.

## The Funding Process

Although the program funding is competitive, patterns of funding have been quite consistent. Table VIII-1 presents an overview of funding from 1980-1986.



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TABLE VIII-1: SECTION 312 FUNDING, 1981-1986

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<u>STATE</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1983</u>	<u>1984</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1986</u>
CALIFORNIA	334	75	(1)	(2)	95	(3)
COLORADO	100	69.6	94.6	86	86	86
FLORIDA	208	(4)	80	(1)	89	(1)
IDAHO	157	157	61	90	100	100
ILLINOIS	115	87	113	77	77	77
NEW YORK	100	50	100	90	80.5	(1)
TEXAS	300	334	(1)	(2)	100	120
TEXAS-BLIND	67	(4)	80	77	77	77
UTAH	82	(4)	88	77	77	77
VIRGINIA	29	(4)	80	90	90	90
WASHINGTON	110	110	110	78	78	133

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NOTES: All values are in thousands of dollars

- (1) did not apply
  - (2) not funded
  - (3) defunded
  - (4) not available
-





State VR agencies have always been the grantees in the Section 312 program, although local agencies may apply for funding to operate programs under the supervision of a state vocational rehabilitation agency. In two currently funded states, Illinois and Utah, the project involves subcontracts between the state agency and a private nonprofit organization.

#### Grant Review Criteria

The peer review process includes several specific funding criteria. Applicants are rated on a scale which ranges from "poor" to "excellent" in each area. The areas evaluated in the review process are:

- Plan of Operation
- Quality of Key Personnel
- Budget and Cost Effectiveness
- Evaluation Plan
- Adequacy of Resources
- Liaison with the State Vocational Rehabilitation Program
- Likelihood of Sustaining the Service Program

The recent funding history shows that competition among state agencies for program funding has not been intense. Only two applicants were turned down in 1985.

The development of the current Section 312 projects suggests that the reason for the lack of competition for Section 312 funds is that state VR agencies only become interested in serving MSFW's when there happens to be a strong advocate for such service within the agency, or when the state planning process includes a systematic inventory of levels of service to minority or other special target groups. In larger states the existing levels of Section 312 funding (usually around \$80,000) do not highly motivate the VR agency to plan, administer, and evaluate a "special project".

For this reason, it is highly desirable to require state VR agencies to address the level of service to MSFW's as part of the regular planning process; otherwise, only the states where there is a strong MSFW constituency will take the initiative to serve the population. Requirements that state VR agencies specifically address MSFW's can, if adequately



monitored, lead to the increased awareness on the part of state administrators of the need to serve MSFW's (as a result of needs assessment activities involved in planning). Additional incentives might include financial support (via planning grants) for developing programs of service to farmworkers.

In addition to the lack of competition, the funding process suffers from another limitation; the grant application encourages, but does not require, the grantee to discuss or document previous performance in relation to grant objectives. Without information on an applicant's "track record" it is difficult for the peer review panel to make a determination regarding adequacy of resources, quality of key personnel, and likelihood of sustaining the service program. Therefore, the peer review panel must review project objectives in isolation without a basis to determine that a specific agency has the ability to meet its proposed objectives. While the panel is expected to determine the feasibility of achieving performance objectives in relation to Plans of Operation, in many cases these plans are not specific enough to allow such a determination to be made.

Closer coordination between RSA and other agencies serving MSFW's might provide avenues to secure improved peer review, by including on peer review panels program practitioners familiar with conditions in the states where service is proposed. Current selection criteria include attention to coordination with other service providers and evaluation of the feasibility of proposed plans. But the peer review panels, as presently constituted, are inadequate to draw conclusions in either of these areas.

Although the grant review process incorporates input from regional office staff, this input is not required to address the grantee's track record, although in many cases it does. In the opinion of the regions, their input was not a significant factor in funding decisions.

The issue of the funding process deserves attention primarily because the process of competitive funding is intended to insure that federal funds are used to further program goals and also to insure that grantees are accountable for achieving well-defined objectives. There has, to date, been little funding competition, poorly-defined objectives, and little



accountability. A more competitive funding process, including nonprofit applicants, more demanding peer review, and more incentives to establish well-defined realistic objectives, and meet them, is an important element in improving RSA's oversight of the Section 312 grantees.

### Grant Negotiation

Grant negotiations were conducted by Regional Office staff with guidelines from the Central Office on new grants. Continuations are negotiated separately by the Regional Office staff. As described by RSA Regional staff, this consisted primarily of requesting modifications of objectives to correspond to reductions in requested funding.

### Monitoring

RSA regional offices were responsible for 'monitoring grantee performance under the section 312 program. None of the Regional Offices was able to monitor projects to the degree necessary to insure that RSA Project Officers were aware of progress or to insure that grantees were in compliance with applicable regulations. The major constraints on Regions' ability to monitor grantee performance were: a) inadequate staff time devoted to Section 312 projects; b) lack of travel funds; and c) grantee reporting was required only on an annual basis.

RSA Regional staff responsible for liaison with Section 312 projects estimated that their level of effort was about 5-10% time. The monitoring which occurred was, primarily, a "desk review" consisting of review of annual reports submitted in connection with the states' continuation grant requests. Although this level of effort is not unusual for small grants, it might be preferable to utilize limited funds for a single national position for a program specialist with monitoring responsibilities, or to decrease frequency to a 2 or 3 year monitoring cycle but providing for a review of project activities in more depth and more attention to validation of standard MIS reporting with on-site reviews.

Although regional staff time for monitoring was limited, the most serious constraint on the ability to monitor performance effectively, according to







Regional Office staff, was the lack of travel funds. This problem was especially serious since most projects included highly rural service areas that were distant from the regional offices.

In addition, the lack of clarity in articulation of grantee evaluation plans meant that meaningful monitoring required actual observation of staff performance. Finally, in some states, VR agencies' project managers' time was so limited that RSA staff questions would, necessarily, have to be referred to projects' local office staff.

In the cases where progress reports raised substantive concerns regarding grantee performance, RSA Regional Office staff action was prompt and directed to immediately resolve the concerns. However, since the grant program required only annual reporting of progress, RSA Regional office reaction was not always timely.

Although formal procedures for monitoring grantee performance were inadequate, RSA Regional staff were informally aware of key issues relevant to project performance.

The Regional staff in some areas had a keen appreciation of key program and service delivery issues involved in farmworker rehabilitation and were actively involved in addressing the issues faced in rehabilitation of farmworkers. In other offices, the Regional staff attention was devoted simply to addressing basic grants management issues.

#### Technical Assistance

RSA Regional offices provided a minimal level of technical assistance to grantees. RSA staff involved in liaison with project were not specialists in service delivery to MSFW's. Several were very interested in the issues pertaining to serving MSFW's and had become informed over the years. Regional office staff generally felt that technical expertise in farmworker issues should be provided by the Central Office, while Regional Offices could deliver routine assistance in grant and program management.

Regional staff were asked how they might be involved in the development



of overall regional strategies to expand and improve vocational rehabilitation services to MSFW's. Most felt that it would be desirable for regional staff to be involved in providing technical assistance to new applicants for grant support from the Section 312 program. However, they observed that the incentives for state participation in the Section 312 grant program were not strong. It was felt that Central Office leadership and emphasis on service to MSFW's would be needed to induce states which were not presently interested in serving MSFW's to make this a service delivery priority.

RSA Regional staff also observed that state vocational agencies were most responsive to policy or philosophical emphases stemming from the existence of a visible and active constituency (e.g., the emphasis on service to the most severely disabled and efforts to transition handicapped youth into employment); no such MSFW constituency existed. Therefore, despite their concern with gaps in the service delivery system (e.g., lack of emphasis on service to MSFW's in most upstream midwestern states), it was felt that little could be done to encourage application from key states.

Some limited capacity-building on a regional basis was observed. In Region VIII, where a non-312 state, New Mexico, wished to develop its ability to serve farmworkers, the RSA regional staff person, arranged that a Section 312 state, Colorado, provide technical assistance. Such regional networking might, in the absence of increased technical assistance effort from within RSA, provide a means to disseminate the existing service delivery models.

### Summary

RSA has successfully used the limited financial and staff resources available to target federal funding under the Section 312 program to areas with major populations of MSFW's. The program of Section 312 funding to state vocational rehabilitation agencies has not developed a national service delivery system for farmworkers, although 312 funding has been provided, at some point in the history of the program, to 13 of the 23 states with the largest MSFW populations.

The level of federal funding alone does not allow statewide coverage in



even those states which are Section 312 grantees. As can be seen in the maps of service delivery areas, the proportion of MSFW impact areas where services were available varies from state to state. What is needed is both an increase in federal funding level and increases in state's commitment of Section 110 funds for services targeted to MSFW's. Increased federal funding would be required to achieve any of the following objectives:

- a) funding at the minimum level to an additional 5-10 major farmworker states which do not currently participate in the Section 312 program
- b) developmental efforts to address special issues in the rehabilitation of MSFW's such as assessment, career orientation, the diagnosis and management of psychological disabilities, and disability prevention efforts in conjunction with health providers.
- c) provision of technical assistance to allow states with less experience in serving farmworkers to build effective service delivery systems.

RSA efforts to improve vocational rehabilitation service to MSFW's has consisted almost exclusively of grants under Section 312 to state vocational rehabilitation agencies (except for efforts to develop a system to track migrants). The level of management effort to at the National Office level has been at approximately 0.2 FTE. Assuming a level of effort of .1 position in each of seven federal regions, the entire level of effort is less than one full-time position. Given this level of oversight, grantees have not been accountable to RSA for establishing clear, well-defined project objectives and for adhering to those objectives, once they have been put forward. Lack of accountability stems from a) insufficient resources to support meaningful monitoring efforts by Regional offices, and b) inadequate attention to grantees' track records.

Respondents at the local, state and regional level all point to the need for RSA leadership in the Central Office to spur innovation and improvement in quality of service to MSFW's. No developmental research has been funded by the National Institute of Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) and lack of funding has eliminated the networking efforts among programs which took place at annual national conferences of program operators. Although interagency cooperation is mandated at the local level, there have been no







collaborative initiatives at the national level, although joint initiatives with the Migrant Health program, the Migrant Education program, and the Section 402 MSFW Employment Training program would facilitate coordination by local program operators.

Leadership is required at the national level to spur state VR agencies toward needed improvements in the quality of rehabilitation services provided to MSFW's. At the Regional level improved monitoring is required to insure grantee accountability to meet stated objectives.

National leadership is needed within RSA to address the unique vocational rehabilitation problems faced by handicapped migrant and seasonal farmworkers and in developing effective incentives to spur state VR agencies toward needed improvements in quality of rehabilitation services provided to MSFW's.

The situation of handicapped MSFW's poses a challenge to RSA both in reassessing its understanding of the multiple factors which contribute to vocational handicaps and in establishing the management incentives required to insure that public sector rehabilitation efforts lead to permanent, stable, and appropriate employment for handicapped MSFW's.

Despite RSA's attempts to allocate approximately \$1 million of Section 312 funding wisely, the effort has not been adequate to the task of developing nationwide capabilities to provide effective service to migrant and seasonal farmworkers. Therefore, it is recommended that, in addition to the incentives provided by the Section 312 grants program, RSA require that state VR agencies in states with substantial populations of migrant or seasonal farmworkers<sup>134</sup> present in their state plans firm commitments to assure that handicapped MSFW's are served in proportion to their population in the state and to assure that they receive the physical restoration and vocational training services needed to be rehabilitated into stable employment.

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<sup>134</sup> These are the 23 States listed in Tables IV-4A and B. RSA may wish to review the demographic data with the Employment Service and the Migrant Health program to determine if additional states have a large enough MSFW population to necessitate incorporation of MSFW's into the State Plans.



## APPENDIX A: THE BASIS FOR STATE BY STATE ESTIMATES OF MSEW POPULATION

### Introduction

As noted in Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers Services: A Service Delivery Assessment<sup>1</sup>, estimates of the total number of migrant and seasonal farmworkers in the U.S. vary immensely, ranging from a low of 1.3 million to a high of 6 million. More recently, the National Governors' Association Center for Policy Research Analysis discusses a number of alternative counts of migrant and seasonal farmworkers in Section II of its working paper on farmworker issues<sup>2</sup> without adopting any definitive figures. The general consensus is that Census-based data which estimates 2.5 million hired farmworkers is particularly misleading because it includes casual farmworkers some of whom are, themselves, dependents of primary wage earners who provide hired farm labor.

### General Assumptions

The Department of Labor definition of a migrant or seasonal farmworker provides a widely accepted basis for distinguishing a population which experiences a number of disadvantages--poverty due to low wage rates and highly seasonal unemployment, low levels of education, a characteristic pattern of health problems, and unfamiliarity with the non-agricultural labor market. The target population for vocational rehabilitation programs, as well as other federal programs serving "migrant and seasonal farmworkers" includes both farmworkers and their dependents.

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<sup>1</sup> p. 2, Confidential Draft, Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers Services: A Service Delivery Assessment, Office of the Inspector General, HEW, December 1979. This includes excellent observations on changing patterns of migration.

<sup>2</sup> Edward Dement, Out of Sight, Out of Mind, An Update on Migrant Farmworker Issues in Today's Agricultural Labor Market, National Governor's Association, March, 1985. This is one of the least satisfactory reviews of the complex issue.



Key points to consider in determining the population of migrant and seasonal farmworkers are the following:

1. Farmworkers are hired farm labor, not farmers or unpaid family workers.
2. Farmworkers' primary source of income must be farmwork, i.e. at least 50% of their income must be from farmwork, or at least 50% of their work time must have been spent in agriculture.
3. Both "casual" hired farmworkers (less than 25 days work per year) and "permanent" hired farmworkers are excluded from the migrant and seasonal population.
4. There are a number of agricultural occupations which are not "farmworker" occupations (e.g. farm managers, forestry workers). Key farmworker occupations are the following. These occupations are defined as Census Occupational Codes 477, 479, 484, 485-489. The key DOT codes are those occupations with the following initial 4 digits -- 401.6-405.6, 407.6-413.6, and 421.6.
5. A recent survey (Martin and Mines, 1986) confirms that farmwork is highly seasonal. The average male head of household worked 26 weeks in farmwork, supplemented that income with 3 weeks of non-farm work, and was unemployed 21 weeks. Although other family members also worked, they experienced even greater seasonality of employment. Married women were unemployed for 34 weeks a year. While half of teenagers 14-17 worked, most probably were employed for less than 8 weeks per year. Farmwork is even more seasonal in other states. Therefore, although family income increases with number of family members working, we can assume that most farmworker family incomes fall below the poverty guidelines.

Based on these considerations, it is possible to develop highly conservative estimates of the farmworker population. While any attempt to designate a farmworker population based on hard and fast guidelines does violence to the true pattern of disadvantage experienced by rural Americans in agricultural areas, the conservative approach has the important benefit of focusing on a population which, without a doubt, has a high degree of need, working under conditions little changed since the initial decisions were made to target services to migrant and seasonal farmworkers.







In developing our estimates of farmworker populations, several data sources were used predominantly.<sup>3</sup> A state-by-state breakdown of migrant and seasonal farmworkers in poverty is provided by a 1977 survey based on Social Security data.<sup>4</sup>

A 1985 county-by-county mapping of migrant and seasonal impact areas by the Migrant Health Program<sup>5</sup> provides an independently-derived estimate of populations. This data source differs from those based on labor market data in that it includes farmworker dependents directly, rather than extrapolating from labor force to total population.

A multiple-frame sample, based on quarterly sampling in January, April, July, and October, by the USDA Statistical Reporting Service, provides yet another important independent source of data which takes into account the relative importance of hired farm labor (as distinct from total farm labor).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Philip Martin, "Farm Labor Data and JTPA 402 Allocations" (unpublished paper, May, 1984. Martin's review of alternative data sources is the definitive one.

<sup>4</sup> Chris Paige, unpublished memo, Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs, 1985. Paige makes extremely cogent arguments to the effect that MSFW's are best approximated in census data by excluding all hired farm hands who are not in poverty, since the unemployment rate and wage rate are likely to place most families meeting DOL criteria into poverty. His unpublished memo, "Discussion of Preliminary Results from the Agricultural Occupation Data Tape" (undated, 1986) outlines this argument.

<sup>5</sup> Migrant and Seasonal Impact Areas, Migrant Health Program, Division of Primary Care Services, Bureau of Health Care Delivery and Assistance, Health Resources and Services Administration, Public Health Services, HHS, November, 1985. This provides the best data on distribution of MSFW populations within states and forms the basis for overlays of MSFW population concentrations and Section 312 service areas.

<sup>6</sup> reproduced in Martin, op. cit, pp.8-9, from USDA, Statistical Reporting Service, 1980



Finally, a model developed by HCR, Inc. for the Migrant Health program gives county-by-county estimates of maximum farm labor demand based on cropping patterns and labor requirements for each crop.<sup>7</sup> This data includes information on total workers needed at peak season, migrant workers needed, and seasonal workers.

Two USDA publications, The Hired Farm Working Force of 1981<sup>8</sup> and Counting Hired Farmworkers<sup>9</sup> must be considered jointly as the former provides the Census-based data on hired farmworkers, while the latter discusses the severe limitations of the 1981 survey data.<sup>10</sup>

Our estimates of MSFW populations in Section IV-Table 4, peak MSFW populations in major agricultural states which are not Section 312 grantees) are based on review of a) Migrant Health data, b) the HCR crop model, c) the 1977 Social Security survey, and d) the USDA Quarterly data.

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<sup>7</sup> Methodology for Designating High Impact Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Areas, HCR, Inc., June 28, 1985. This model is valuable in generating local level data but seems to fail for either extremely high cropping patterns or extremely low ones, yielding more plausible estimates in the middle range. Most probably, the model's problems stem from assuming that farm labor demand is a linear function of crop acreage, an assumption which is demonstrably false in the areas of most intensive agricultural production (e.g. California's San Joaquin Valley) where agriculture has become more mechanized.

<sup>8</sup> Susan L. Pollack and William R. Jackson, The Hired Farm Working Force of 1981, Agricultural Economic Report Number 507, Economic Research Service, USDA, November, 1983.

<sup>9</sup> Leslie A. Whitener, Counting Hired Farmworkers: Some Points to Consider, Agricultural Economic Report Number 524, Economic Research Service, USDA, December, 1984.

<sup>10</sup> Dr. Mark Cooper, a public policy analyst has produced a database, "The Agricultural Occupation Data Tape" based on the 5% sample of the U.S. Census which attempts, with some success, to overcome the limitations of the official count of farmworkers. Dr. Cooper estimates a total MSFW population of 1.7 million (personal communication, September 4, 1986); however, certain of Whitener's and Martin's caveats regarding the March, 1981 data apply to the Cooper database as well as to Pollack and Jackson's published data. In addition to the documentation for the datasets, additional remarks by Dr. Cooper, "The Mystery of the Disappearing Farm Worker" (in a January 27, 1986 speech to The Committee for Farmworker Programs) provide further perspective on the tape.





As can be seen, in the table below there is considerable variance in estimates of farmworker populations based on the different sources of data, as well as differences between peak population (Migrant Health) and average population (USDA/1980). Therefore, our best estimates of farmworker populations must take into account the specific conditions affecting validity of figures on a state-by-state basis.

Several assumptions are made in comparing the disparate sources of data. They include the following:

1. Figures based on employment data underestimate children working in agriculture (whose earnings are most probably reported together with parents'. However, few children under 13 work, and only half of those 14-17 work. Non-working family members, make up approximately 40% of the MSFW population, while another 60% (including women and children) are in the labor force (Martin and Mines, 1980-Table I-4). We estimate total MSFW population as only 1.5 times the population of workers.
2. The proportion of MSFW's in poverty varies from state to state. However, it is assumed that Mid-Western and Eastern farmworkers are more likely to be in poverty than farmworkers in California, with other Western farmworkers falling in between. Therefore, Social Security data is most likely to underestimate MSFW's in the West.
3. Estimates of farmworkers based on the HCR crop model overestimate the MSFW population in counties with smaller proportions of agriculture, as MSFW's are less likely to seek or find employment where labor market demand is weak. The model may also be incorrect where new cropping patterns have appeared (e.g. after the Rio Grande Valley freeze), or where mechanization has affected a crop's labor demand. The model, also, does not account for large populations of farmworkers in homebase states. It is also likely that the crop model overestimates labor demand in areas where smaller farms predominate and jobs are more likely to be filled by casual labor (working less than 25 days/year). It is, however, useful in that it provides estimates of peak populations.
4. The USDA quarterly frame sample underestimate peak migrant populations in the Eastern Migrant Stream. Therefore, in those states we adopt the higher estimates put forward by Migrant Health.
5. In states with large proportions of family farmers, e.g. Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, the USDA quarterly frame sample overestimates the MSFW population because of the overrepresentation of casual hired labor. It is in these same states that the HCR crop model works least well.





6. Because of the high proportion of Texas farmworkers who are migrants, the aggregate peak population of Midwest upstream states must account for a credible proportion of Texas migrants, somewhere in the order of 150,000 persons. Similarly, upstream states on the Eastern Seaboard must account for a reasonable share of Florida's homebase migrants, in addition to Puerto Rican migrants.
7. Finally, additional considerations have led us to lower estimates of MSFW populations in Texas and California, in particular, Cardenas study of the post-1983 freeze agricultural labor force in the Texas Rio Grande Valley which suggest that migrant health and HCR crop models over-estimate the population. Similar considerations, including loss of agricultural land to urban development, labor force shifts to service industry occupations which support agriculture, and mechanization, enter into our very conservative estimates of California MSFW populations.

Tables A-1 and A-2 give the varying estimates of farmworker populations in the 10 states funded by RSA, based on the most important of these data sources.

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TABLE A-1: FARMWORKER POPULATION ESTIMATES BY DATA SOURCE  
SECTION 312 STATES

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<u>STATE</u>	<u>USDA/1980</u>	<u>SOCIAL SECURITY/1977</u>	<u>MIGRANT HEALTH</u>	<u>EHW</u>
CA	197,000	373,000	475,000	425,000
CO	19,000	24,000	33,000	30,000
FL	68,000	132,000	87,000	110,000
ID	20,000	31,000	39,000	32,000
IL	33,000	48,000	40,000	40,000
NY	11,000	46,000	32,000	32,000
TX	77,000	132,000	362,000	330,000
UT	6,000	8,000	7,000	10,000
VA	26,000	21,000	9,500	21,000
WA	44,000	64,000	103,000	75,000

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TABLE A-2: FARMWORKER POPULATION ESTIMATES BY DATA SOURCE  
NON-SECTION 312 STATES

<u>STATE</u>	<u>USDA/1980</u>	<u>SOCIAL SECURITY/1977</u>	<u>MIGRANT HEALTH</u>	<u>EHW</u>
ARIZONA	14,000	38,000	40,000	40,000
DELAWARE	2,200	4,000	47,000	20,000
GEORGIA	68,000	29,000	4,600	25,000
INDIANA	27,000	26,000	32,000	25,000
MICHIGAN	31,000	39,000	70,000	65,000
MISS.	32,000	28,000	-----	28,000
MINNESOTA	31,000	32,000	25,000	30,000
N.J.	37,000	15,000	53,000	30,000
N. CAROL	55,000	63,000	210,000	60,000
OHIO	30,000	36,000	20,000	35,000
OREGON	26,000	38,000	85,000	60,000
PENN.	35,000	32,000	18,000	20,000
WISCONSIN	55,000	33,000	6,000	30,000



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